

THE PHILIPPINES' FIRST TECH LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

Volume XXV Issue VII

ISSN 0118-0142

GADGETS

MAGAZINE

ELECTRIFY YOUR RIDE

THE GREEN MOBILITY
REVOLUTION

COVERSTORY

What I Learned After Switching to an EV

EV Jargon: Epic Vibes? Elite Vision?
Or Simply... Electric Vehicles?

Embracing EVs For Sustainable
Mobility

The Power Of Electric: Beyond
The Commute

TEST DRIVE

Tesla Model 3

Honda CR-V
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GADGETSLAB

HyperX Cloud Mini
JBL Tour Pro 3
Lenovo IdeaPad Slim 5x
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Your life, upgraded



We are more
than just tech

Cover Story

What I Learned After Switching To An EV	6
EV Jargon: Epic Vibes? Elite Vision? Or Simply... Electric Vehicles?	10
Embracing EVs For Sustainable Mobility	16
The Power Of Electric: Beyond The Commute	20



Parade

Asus ExpertBook P5	24
Asus ExpertCenter P500	28
Huawei Mate X6	30
CASIO CRW-01	32
Garmin Descent X50i	34
Redmi Note 14	36
Oppo Reno13 Series 5G	38
Epson SureColor SC-F1030	42
Epson SureColor SC-V1030	43



Gadgets Lab

HyperX Cloud Mini	44
JBL Tour Pro 3	48
Lenovo IdeaPad Slim 5x	52
Redmi Note 14 5G	56

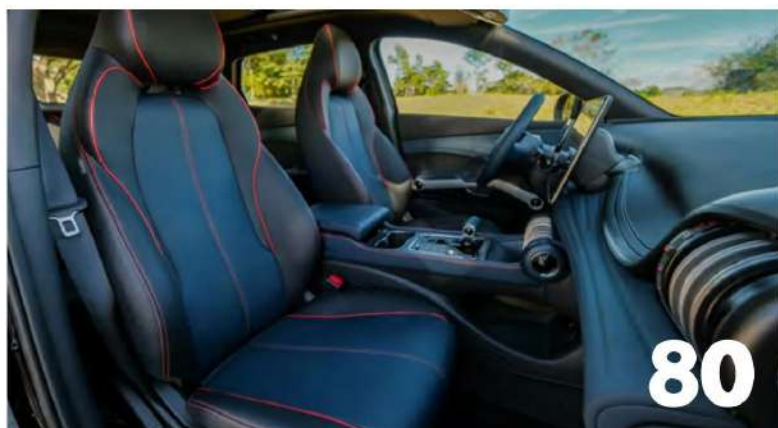


Test Drive

Test Drive: Tesla Model 3	60
Test Drive: Honda CR-V	68
Test Drive: Nissan Kicks	72

Mobility

Kia Sorento Turbo Hybrid	76
BYD Atto 3 Refreshed For 2025	80
On The Radar: Make Your Statement Count With Mio Fazzio!	84
One Suzuki Kick-Off Ride Marks Golden Year Celebration	86
The All-New Honda Giorno+	90
Grab CommuniKit: Empowering Deaf Driver-Partners	94



Apps

- Evro: Transforming The EV Charging Experience In The Philippines 96

AI

- DeepSeek: A Rising Star In AI, But At What Cost? 98

Cybersecurity

- Cisco AI Defense Secures the AI Transformation of Enterprises 102

Gaming

- Flint: Treasure of Oblivion 106

Travel

- Hidden Gems in Japan and South Korea Must-Visit Spots for Filipinos in 2025 110

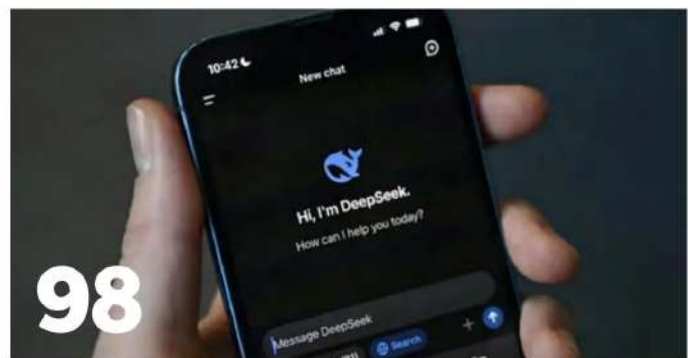
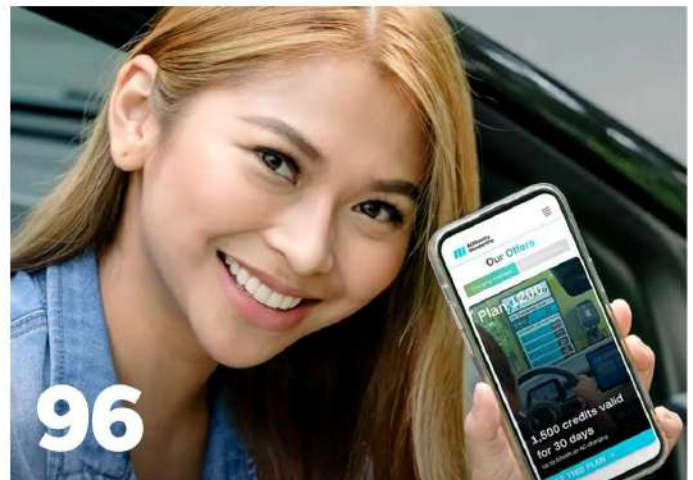


Newsbytes

- Agoda Expands Eco Deals Program 114
- Grab and BYD Enter Strategic Regional Partnership to Expand EV Fleet 116
- Kingston Technology Remains Among Top Private Companies In 2024 117
- Pag-IBIG Fund Named Among Top Performers for Good Governance 118
- PITX Launches GET EV Shuttle Service For Sustainable And Reliable Commuting 119

Relic

- Detroit Electric 120



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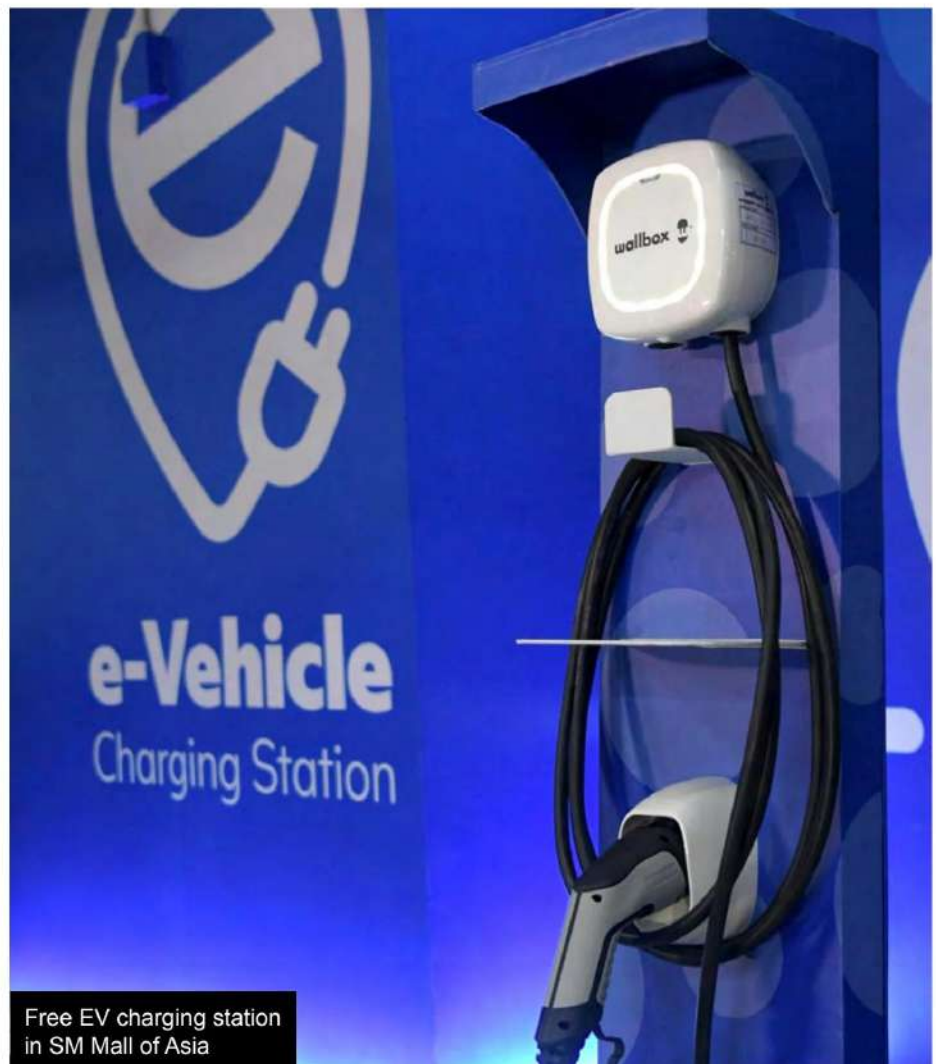
WHAT I LEARNED AFTER SWITCHING TO AN EV

Words by **Gabriel Pe**

Electric vehicles are finally making their way to the Philippines. Chinese automakers such as BYD, Dongfeng, and GWM, along with the SAIC-backed MG, have introduced a wide range of EVs and range-extended hybrids. New players like Vietnam's VinFast and established names such as Nissan, Hyundai, and Kia have also entered the market. And now, the biggest name of them all, Tesla, has officially set up shop in BGC, with the first batch of Tesla-sold cars expected for delivery in early 2025.

Beyond the increasing variety of EV models, rising fuel prices have made electric and hybrid vehicles an appealing choice for commuters seeking relief from volatile fuel costs and the hassle of color coding restrictions. EVs have gained such traction that sales are projected to hit 18,000 units by the end of the year.

I, too, have joined the EV movement. What started as a secondary vehicle has quickly become our daily driver, transforming our perspective on driving. Over the past five months, our experience with an EV has been eye-opening—offering unexpected joys, newfound conveniences, and a fair share of lessons worth sharing.



Charging Infrastructure: Available But Still Evolving

One of the most important lessons I've learned is that the charging infrastructure is already here—but mostly if you live in Metro Manila. Charging stations, particularly those located in malls and select gasoline stations, are accessible and far cheaper than refueling with gasoline. However, as EV adoption increases, competition for charging spots has become more noticeable, making the demand for additional stations even more pressing.

Malls have become the primary charging hubs, but they are increasingly crowded with EV users. Unlike the early days when EV chargers in malls were easy to access, it is now common to find all the charging slots occupied. This growing congestion highlights the need for more charging stations to accommodate the expanding EV population.

The best way to charge, however, is at home. Plugging in your car overnight ensures that it's ready whenever you need it. More importantly, it is significantly cheaper. While public charging stations have started imposing fees—PHP35 per kWh for DC fast chargers and PHP28 per kWh for AC chargers—the standard residential rate is just over PHP12 per kWh, making home charging the most cost-effective solution.

Misconceptions and Myths Still Linger

Apprehensions about new technology are common, and misinformation continues to slow down EV adoption in the Philippines. One of the most prevalent myths is that EVs are a fire hazard and prone to spontaneous combustion.

Social media exaggerations haven't helped, but studies from Europe, the US, and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) debunk this claim. In fact, research by AutoinsuranceEZ.com shows that hybrid vehicles are the most fire-prone, with 3,474 fires per 100,000 units sold, followed by internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles at 1,529 per 100,000. EVs rank the lowest, with only 25 fires per 100,000 units sold.

That said, EV fires, though rare, are more complex to manage due to the nature of lithium-ion batteries. Modern EVs mitigate this risk with active cooling

systems, but if a fire does occur, the best course of action is to evacuate immediately and call the fire department, as lithium fires can reignite unexpectedly.

EVs Make City Driving More Enjoyable

Shifting to an EV has reignited my love for driving. The instant torque and acceleration make it feel like piloting a rocket—without the guilt of excessive fuel consumption. Traffic is also less stressful, as EVs consume minimal power when idling, unlike gas-powered cars that burn fuel even when stationary.

Another perk is regenerative braking, which recovers energy each time you slowly brake or coast. However, this feature is less effective in bumper-to-bumper traffic, where there isn't enough momentum for significant energy recovery. That means while EVs are efficient in the city, rush-hour jams on EDSA are still as exhausting as ever.

Highway Driving and Road Trips Present Challenges

While EVs excel in urban settings, long-distance highway drives expose some limitations. Unlike gas-powered vehicles, which become more fuel-efficient at cruising speeds, EVs consume energy at a steady rate and even more when climbing steep roads. A trip to Baguio highlighted this downside, as uphill climbs significantly drained battery life.

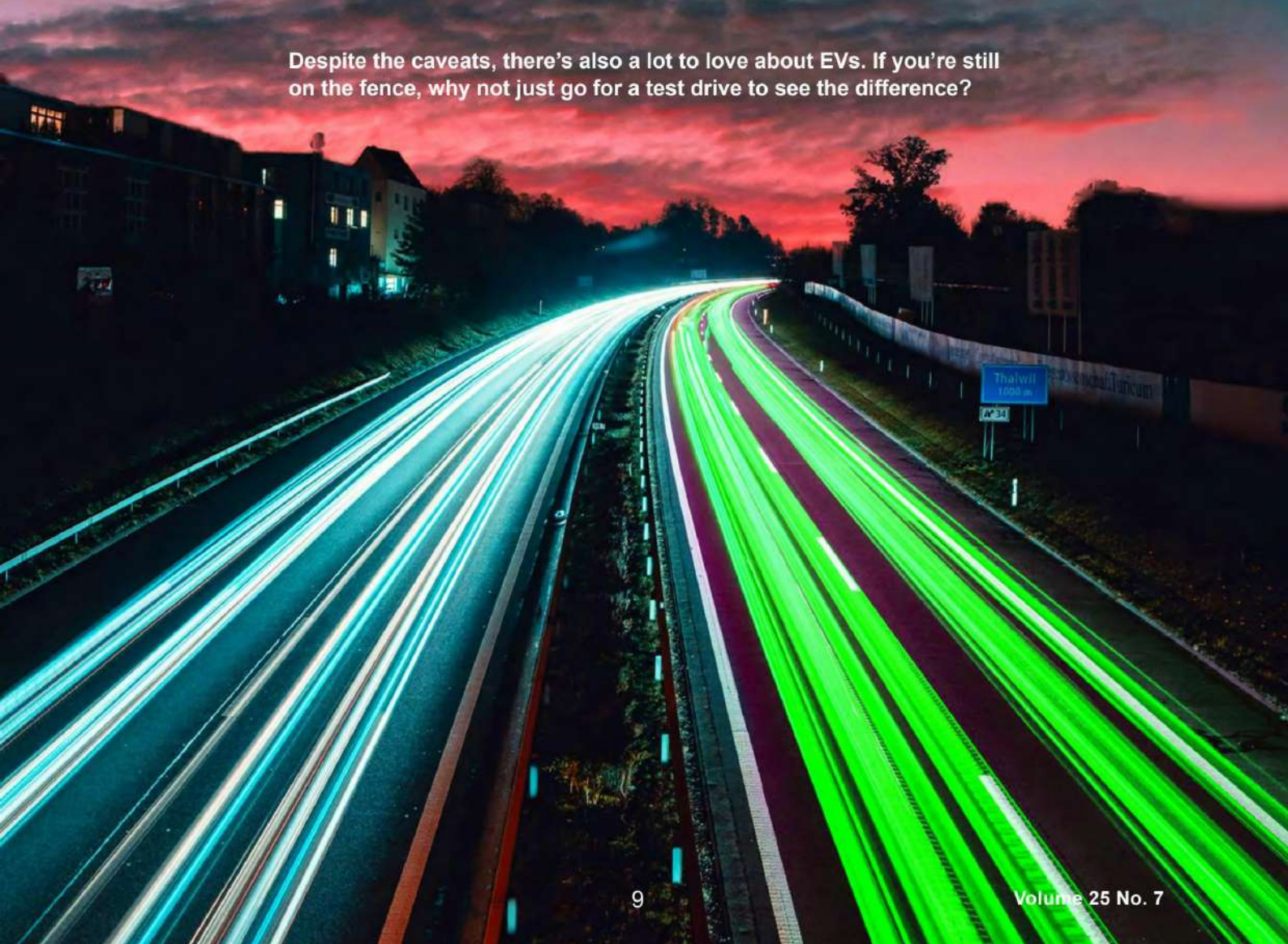
Another challenge is the lack of charging infrastructure outside Metro Manila. As of now, only three expressway gas stations offer EV chargers, and while the Department of Energy has announced plans to expand this, road trips still require meticulous planning. Some hotels now offer charging stations, but spontaneous long-distance drives remain difficult.

The Future of EVs in the Philippines

Despite its challenges, the EV revolution is undeniably here. Manila's daily commutes rarely exceed 50 kilometers, while most of Luzon's top destinations are within 500 kilometers of the capital—well within the range of most EVs. Charging infrastructure is expanding, albeit not as fast as demand, but with proper planning, EV ownership is becoming more practical.

The transition won't happen overnight, but momentum is building. As infrastructure improves and more people embrace EVs, the barriers to adoption will continue to fall. While some concerns remain, the advantages of EVs—lower operational costs, zero tailpipe emissions, and a significantly improved driving experience—far outweigh the drawbacks.

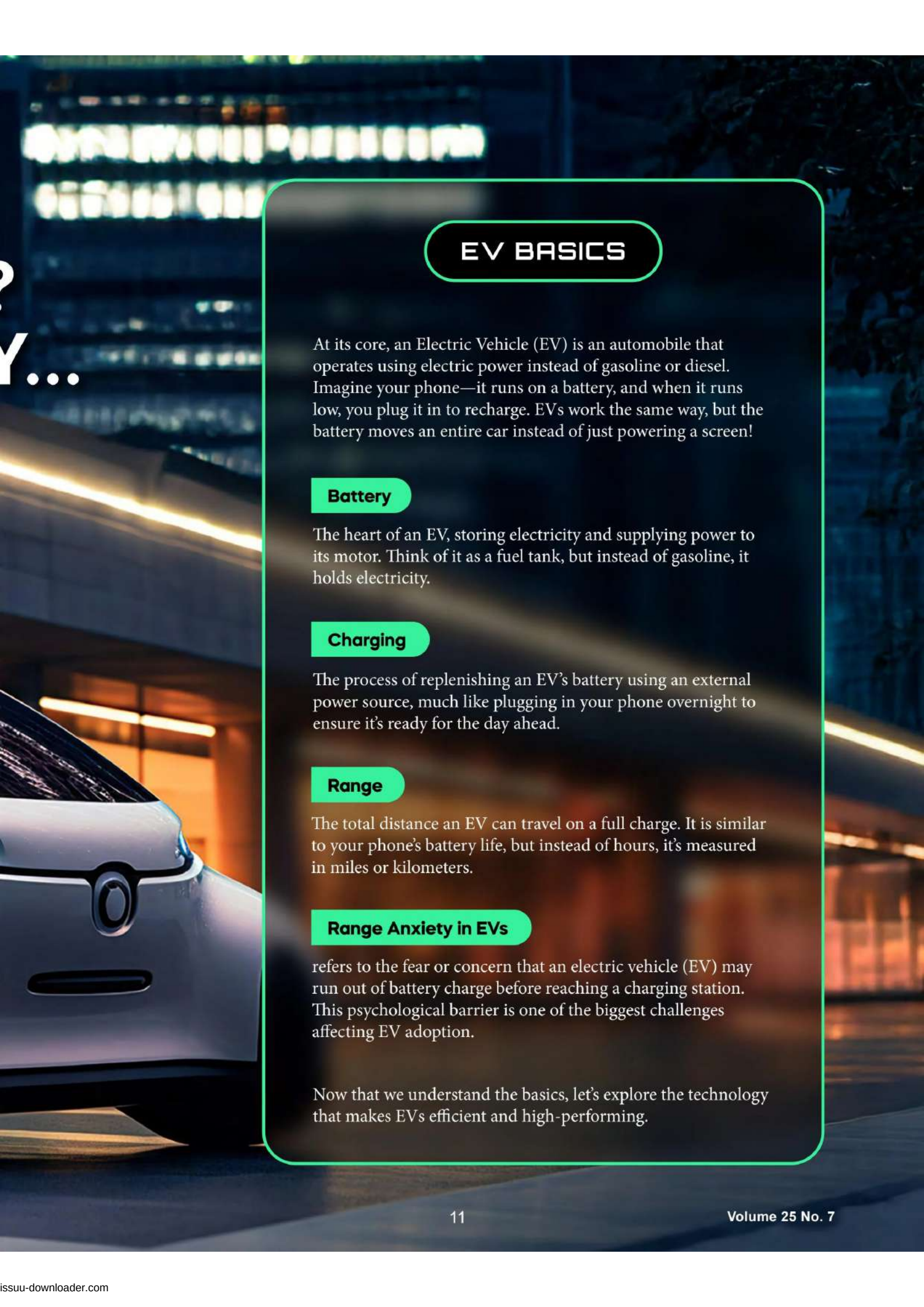
Despite the caveats, there's also a lot to love about EVs. If you're still on the fence, why not just go for a test drive to see the difference?



EV JARGON: EPIC VIBES? ELITE VISION? OR SIMPLY ELECTRIC VEHICLES?

Words by Aljhelyn Piador

What exactly is EV? Is it short for Epic Vibes, capturing the excitement of cutting-edge technology? Or does it stand for Elite Vision, symbolizing the future of mobility and sustainability? Maybe it's all about transformation—E**V**olve into a new era of transportation. But in reality, EV stands for **Electric Vehicle**, a revolutionary innovation reshaping how we move. And if you stick around, you might just walk away not only with a better understanding of EVs but also with an Enriched Vocabulary on the topic.



EV BASICS

At its core, an Electric Vehicle (EV) is an automobile that operates using electric power instead of gasoline or diesel. Imagine your phone—it runs on a battery, and when it runs low, you plug it in to recharge. EVs work the same way, but the battery moves an entire car instead of just powering a screen!

Battery

The heart of an EV, storing electricity and supplying power to its motor. Think of it as a fuel tank, but instead of gasoline, it holds electricity.

Charging

The process of replenishing an EV's battery using an external power source, much like plugging in your phone overnight to ensure it's ready for the day ahead.

Range

The total distance an EV can travel on a full charge. It is similar to your phone's battery life, but instead of hours, it's measured in miles or kilometers.

Range Anxiety in EVs

refers to the fear or concern that an electric vehicle (EV) may run out of battery charge before reaching a charging station. This psychological barrier is one of the biggest challenges affecting EV adoption.

Now that we understand the basics, let's explore the technology that makes EVs efficient and high-performing.

EV TECHNOLOGY & PERFORMANCE

EVs aren't just about replacing gasoline with electricity—they're built for efficiency and innovation. Here are key technological elements that set EVs apart:

Kilowatt-hour (kWh)

A unit that measures an EV's electricity use. Think of it like a water bottle—the bigger it is, the longer it lasts, just like an EV's battery.

Regenerative Braking

A system that recovers energy while braking and stores it in the battery, extending driving range. Imagine pedaling a bike downhill—if you press the brakes, your bike slows down, but in this case, that braking energy is recaptured and reused.

Energy Efficiency

Unlike gasoline cars that lose energy as heat, EVs convert most of their electricity into motion. Think of it like pouring water into a bucket—EVs ensure more energy stays in the system rather than being wasted.

Instantaneous Torque

The force that turns the wheels. EVs deliver instant torque, providing quick and smooth acceleration, just like how a light instantly turns on when you flip the switch.



Now that we've covered performance, let's look at the different types of EVs available today.

TYPES OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Not all EVs are the same. They come in different types, each with unique characteristics:



Hybrid

Uses both a gasoline engine and an electric motor for optimal efficiency. Like a hybrid bicycle—you can pedal manually or use an electric boost when needed.



Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV)

A hybrid that can be plugged in for charging but also has a gasoline engine as a backup. Imagine a rechargeable flash light that can also use disposable batteries if needed.



Range-Extended Electric Vehicle (REx EV)

A type of plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) that primarily runs on an electric motor and battery but includes a small gasoline engine as a backup generator. Unlike traditional hybrids, the gas engine in a REx EV does not drive the wheels—it only charges the battery when it gets low.



Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV)

Runs solely on battery power with no gasoline engine, like a wireless laptop that operates only on a battery without a power cord.

With different types of EVs emerging, battery technology plays a crucial role in their success.

THE LIFELINE OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Batteries are the powerhouse of EVs, and advancements have made them more efficient and reliable than ever:



Lithium-ion Battery

The most common type, known for being lightweight, long-lasting, and efficient—similar to the battery in your smartphone, but on a much larger scale.

- **NMC (Nickel Manganese Cobalt) Battery:** A type of lithium-ion battery that offers high energy density, longer range, and fast charging, but is more expensive and has a lower lifespan.
- **LFP (Lithium Iron Phosphate) Battery:** A lithium-ion battery known for its long lifespan, better safety, and lower cost, but with lower energy density and slower charging.



Fast Charging

A method that reduces charging time significantly, allowing EVs to power up in minutes rather than hours. Like a high-speed phone charger that quickly boosts battery life.

- **AC Charging (Slower, Home & Public Chargers)** – Like charging your phone overnight, AC (Alternating Current) charging is slower but suitable for home or workplace charging.
- **DC Fast Charging (Super Fast, Highway Stations)** – Like a turbo phone charger, DC (Direct Current) fast charging powers up an EV in minutes—perfect for road trips. You'll find it at places like Tesla Superchargers or ACMobility stations.



Fast Charging Battery Swap Technology

is an alternative to traditional fast charging, where instead of waiting for a battery to recharge, an electric vehicle (EV) or device simply swaps out a depleted battery for a fully charged one. This process is designed to be extremely quick, often taking just a few minutes, making it comparable to refueling a gasoline-powered car.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

One of the biggest reasons for the rise of EVs is their positive impact on the environment and urban development:

Sustainability

EVs help reduce carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels, making transportation more eco-friendly. It's like switching from disposable plastic bottles to reusable ones—better for the environment in the long run.

Zero Emissions

Unlike gasoline cars, EVs produce no exhaust emissions, improving air quality and public health. Think of riding a bicycle instead of driving—it's a cleaner way to travel.

Infrastructure Growth

The expansion of EV charging stations is making electric mobility more accessible. Similar to how Wi-Fi hotspots became widespread, more charging stations mean more convenience for drivers.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Electric Vehicles are more than just a trend—they're the future of transportation. Whether you're an automotive enthusiast, an eco-conscious driver, or someone simply curious about EVs, understanding the technology behind them is essential.

So, the next time someone asks, "What is EV?" you can confidently say, "It's the future, it's innovation, and it's here to stay." And who knows? You might just **EVolve** into an advocate for sustainable driving.

Cover story



Photo by Martin Kattler on Unsplash

EMBRACING EVs FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

Words by **Phia Manuell Layoso**

A new wave of mobility solutions is quickly sweeping the Philippines' busy urban landscapes where traffic congestion and long commutes are part of everyday life. From zipping through traffic on electric scooters to cruising effortlessly on ebikes, these innovative devices are making daily commutes faster, greener, and more convenient. As the world steps into sustainable living, electric cars are ushering in a revolution, changing how we move to our cities.

A New Era of Urban Mobility: The Rise of Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs)

Personal Mobility Devices such as electric scooters and eBikes redefine the transport model. Contributing to a convenient yet sustainable future of mobility through fast, efficient, and environmentally friendly short to medium-distance solutions. Whether going to work or just cruising around town on a leisure ride, moving around is made easy, affordable, and fun.

Electric scooters are now becoming trendy for urban commuters — quick, efficient, and affordable, yet not harming the environment. Light gadgets such as these can weave a path through the most crowded streets in cities, saving commuters from being stuck in those infamous traffic jams. With an electric scooter,

one can enjoy a fantastic range of up to 50 kilometers, just enough for traveling short to medium distances to work, school, or friends.

Electric scooters are also low maintenance, considering that they have fewer moving parts than regular vehicles. They require very minimal servicing, mainly for the tires and the care of the battery, making e-scooters quite economical in the long term. Unlike their gasoline-powered counterparts, electric scooters do not emit any gases, thus contributing to cleaner air with their lower carbon footprints.

Ebikes, meanwhile, offer the comfort and convenience of conventional cycling with the help of electric power. While ebikes cost a bit more to buy, they pay off in the long run — for fuel, parking, and public transportation. Beyond practicality, ebikes encourage physical activity for overall wellness — through a fun, time-saving journey compared to typical commutes.

By combining light exercise through assisted riding, ebikes offer a potential solution for users who don't feel they are athletic enough for cycling. In addition to being an environmentally friendly vehicle, ebikes can be a transformative solution for both individuals and cities that seek more sustainable, people-friendly transportation systems.

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a person in a racing suit sitting in a specialized three-wheeled wheelchair. The person is wearing a grey and black checkered racing suit and is holding the handlebars. The wheelchair has a large rear wheel with a silver rim and a smaller front wheel. The background is a blurred racetrack with orange and white markings.

Cover story

Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash

Electric scooters and ebikes are revolutionizing the concept of urban transportation. They deliver convenience, affordability, and sustainability, making them ideal for short to medium-distance commutes. These personal mobility devices are opening up a fun and efficient means of travel that reduces environmental impact, paving the way for a greener, more inclusive future of urban mobility.

Personal Mobility Aids: More Than Just Transport

Personal Mobility Aids (PMAs) are game-changers for people with physical challenges. With the help of these mobility aids, individuals can now move more confidently and freely. The use of electric wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and other assistive devices makes it easier for physically challenged individuals to move around their surroundings.

These aids give basic support that enables the users to travel long distances, go to public spaces, and participate in activities that would otherwise be inaccessible. For persons with limited strength, stamina, or coordination, PMAs reduce strain in walking while providing a much smoother and much more efficient journey from one point to another.

Beyond mobility, PMAs enhance quality of life by promoting independence, social inclusion, and overall well-being. Daily activities, such as going to work or doing some shopping or just spending time outside, can become more accessible.

Challenges of EV's: Limitations and Safety Concerns

Electric vehicles, such as ebikes, electric scooters, and PMDs, have a lot of advantages but they also face some challenges. Limited range and the need for frequent recharging can be inconvenient, especially in areas with poor charging infrastructure. Over time, battery performance declines, affecting reliability—particularly for long-distance commuters.



Safety is still one of the main problems as the number of accidents involving these vehicles have grown in many urban areas. Riders face the risks of possible injuries due to traffic, poor road conditions, and the absence of safety support systems.

Despite these challenges, responsible usage, proper maintenance, and advocacy for better infrastructure can help mitigate risks and maximize the benefits of electric vehicles. These can help minimize the risks while improving the benefits of electric vehicles, so people can live in a cleaner and more sustainable world.

Looking Ahead

Electric mobility devices, whether ebikes, electric scooters, or PMDs, —are not just trends; they are the future of transport. As cities in the Philippines evolve and become more environmentally conscious, embracing these innovations may be key to solving some of our most pressing transport problems. Proper regulation, infrastructure, and public education can help bring about a much cleaner and more efficient way of commuting in cities.



THE POWER OF ELECTRIC

BEYOND THE COMMUTE

Words by Alyssa Joji Silva

From electric cars to air drones, eco-friendly technology is having its moment—and it's about time. These innovations are not only transforming how we travel but are also redefining sustainability in everyday life. With advancements in battery life, faster charging, and smarter features, electric vehicles (EVs) are set to become game-changers, particularly in critical sectors like logistics.

Fast, Green, and Life-Saving

The idea of faster, more efficient delivery has been on my mind lately—especially when considering Metro Manila's notorious traffic. But what if we could bypass it altogether?

This isn't just wishful thinking. Researchers are already exploring how drones can deliver hospital supplies swiftly and with zero waste. Aerial drones have illuminated the night sky as fireworks alternatives, captured breathtaking content, and played crucial roles in military operations. But their potential extends far beyond these applications.

For instance, a study published in the [National Library of Medicine](#) examined how drones could be used to transport blood products between medical facilities. The researchers analyzed the speed and efficiency of aerial drones in delivering blood while also measuring their impact on reducing waste. The results were impressive: the drones not only met critical medical needs with their speed but also helped optimize healthcare logistics by reducing unnecessary blood waste.

Beyond healthcare, drones are already transforming logistics and supply chain operations. Companies are testing drone deliveries for pharmaceuticals, food, and even emergency relief supplies. The potential to revolutionize last-mile delivery—particularly in hard-to-reach areas—is immense.

While aerial drones are making a mark, EVs are also stepping into the spotlight with their sleek designs and environmentally friendly promise.

Greener Deliveries Ahead!

As the automotive industry embraces cutting-edge technology, companies like DHL Express are leading the charge in sustainable logistics. In [2024](#), DHL introduced 47 new EVs to its Philippine fleet—accounting for a quarter of its total delivery vehicles. Their commitment to a greener future extends to a diversified fleet that includes 10 trucks, 8 vans, and 7 electric motorcycles.

The transition to EVs is part of DHL's broader sustainability goals, aiming to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. By investing in EVs, they are significantly cutting carbon footprints while also reducing fuel costs. EVs are proving to be more cost-effective in the long run, with lower maintenance needs and savings on fuel expenses.



EVs are no longer just a futuristic concept; they are redefining how we move and deliver goods. By reducing emissions and lowering operating costs, these vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative for businesses and cities alike. Since quicker travel times and fewer carbon emissions contribute to a more efficient supply chain, logistics companies are increasingly adopting EV technology.





The Future of Logistics: A Flying Revolution?

At CES 2025, several automakers unveiled groundbreaking innovations that could revolutionize logistics. One standout was the Xpeng Aero HT, a modular flying car by the Chinese company Xpeng. This futuristic vehicle features an integrated drone that can be deployed mid-flight, merging advanced technology with versatility.

Envisioning this in the Philippine context, the [Xpeng Aero HT](#) could be a game-changer, slashing travel times and minimizing emissions—an ideal solution for our traffic-clogged streets. Imagine a future where deliveries are no longer bound by congested roads but instead take to the skies, reaching destinations in record time while maintaining zero emissions.

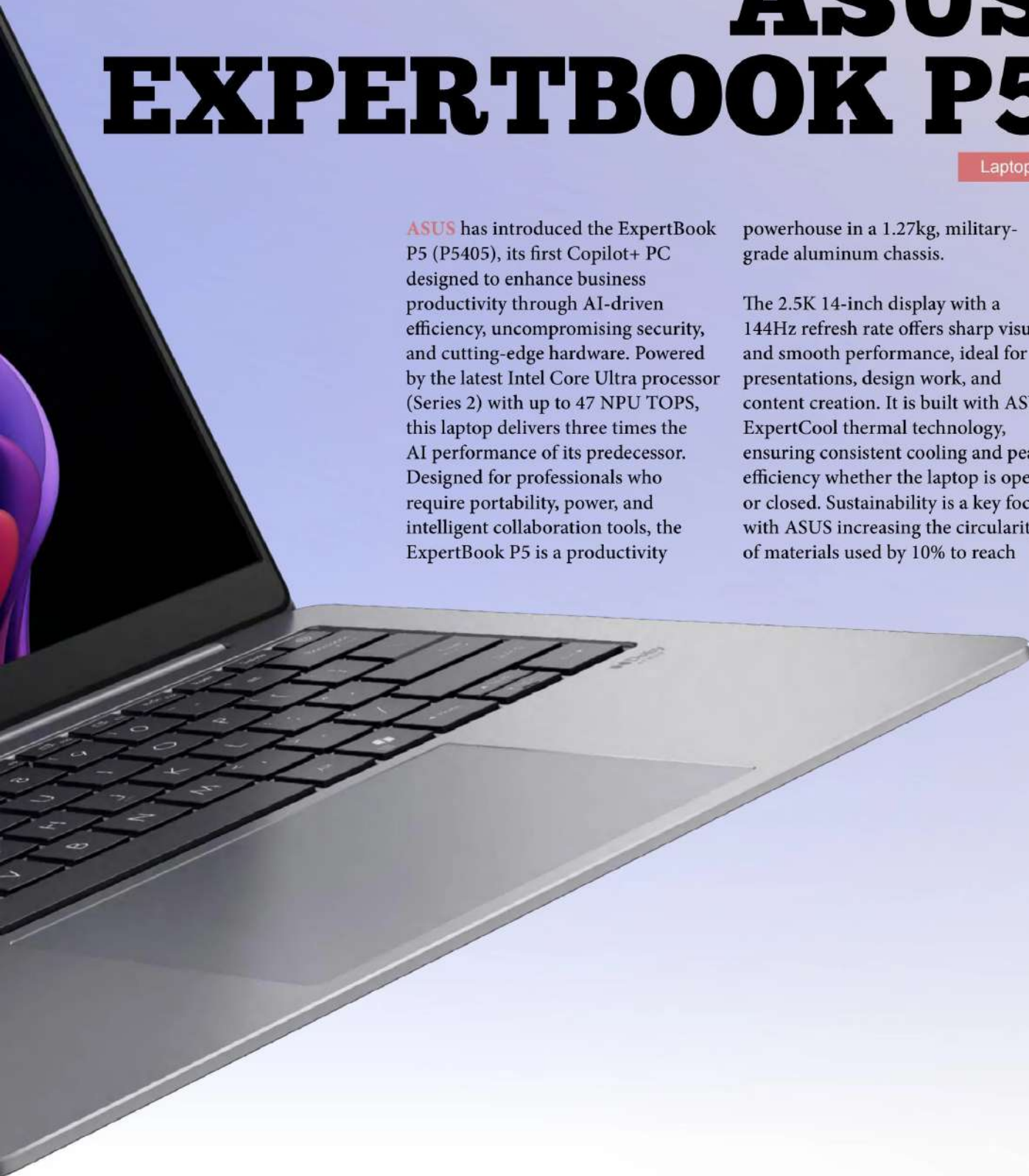
Of course, transitioning to an all-electric logistics ecosystem in the Philippines is a complex challenge that requires careful planning and infrastructure development. But companies like DHL Express have already demonstrated that it's

possible. With strategic investments in charging stations, stronger public-private partnerships, and collaborations with local governments, the country could move toward a logistics system that is not just efficient but also environmentally responsible.

The future of logistics is electric, and with the right approach, it could be airborne, too. The question is no longer if but when, these technologies will become mainstream, changing the way we think about transportation, logistics, and sustainability.





A close-up, low-angle shot of the ASUS ExpertBook P5 laptop. The laptop is silver with a black keyboard and a large, dark display screen. The screen shows a colorful, abstract graphic. The laptop is open, and the keyboard is visible. The background is a light blue gradient.

ASUS EXPERTBOOK P5

Laptop

ASUS has introduced the ExpertBook P5 (P5405), its first Copilot+ PC designed to enhance business productivity through AI-driven efficiency, uncompromising security, and cutting-edge hardware. Powered by the latest Intel Core Ultra processor (Series 2) with up to 47 NPU TOPS, this laptop delivers three times the AI performance of its predecessor. Designed for professionals who require portability, power, and intelligent collaboration tools, the ExpertBook P5 is a productivity

powerhouse in a 1.27kg, military-grade aluminum chassis.

The 2.5K 14-inch display with a 144Hz refresh rate offers sharp visuals and smooth performance, ideal for presentations, design work, and content creation. It is built with ASUS ExpertCool thermal technology, ensuring consistent cooling and peak efficiency whether the laptop is open or closed. Sustainability is a key focus, with ASUS increasing the circularity of materials used by 10% to reach



50%, integrating recycled components and a modular design to reduce e-waste.

The AI-powered ExpertMeet suite transforms virtual meetings by providing real-time transcription, AI-generated summaries, translated subtitles, and business card watermarks for video calls. This on-device AI assistant enhances collaboration, privacy, and engagement while maintaining data security through local processing.

The ExpertBook P5's security features are designed for enterprise use, featuring a NIST SP 800-155-compliant BIOS, Windows 11 Secured-core PC technology, and five years of ASUS BIOS and driver updates. It includes a free one-year McAfee+ Premium membership, which offers AI-driven deepfake detection, phishing protection, and advanced cybersecurity measures.

Connectivity is optimized for modern workflows, with WiFi 6E (upgradeable to WiFi 7 in 2025), Thunderbolt 4, HDMI 2.1, and multiple USB ports. The 63Wh battery ensures all-day productivity, and the ASUS Business Support package provides on-site repairs, 24/7 customer assistance, and dedicated technical support.

The ExpertBook P5 (P5405) is now available worldwide.



ASUS EXPERTCENTER P500

Desktop Computer

ASUS has introduced the ExpertCenter P500 Mini Tower (P500MV), a high-performance desktop designed to deliver exceptional value, security, and efficiency for small businesses. With up to an Intel Core i7-13620H processor, this mini tower offers up to 95W TDP, delivering 30% better peak performance than other desktops in its class. It supports up to an NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4060 discrete GPU, enabling high-end graphics processing for demanding applications.

With up to 64GB of DDR5 RAM and 2TB of HDD storage, the system provides fast multitasking and ample space for business operations. The ASUS Tower Air Cooler integrates three partially-flattened 6.7mm heat pipes and a 9cm fan, covering a heat-dissipation area of 3,402 cm²—up to four times larger than conventional desktop PCs. This efficient cooling system reduces power consumption by up to 38%, while operating at a silent 24dB in quiet mode, ensuring reliable performance under heavy workloads.

Security is a priority with ASUS ExpertGuardian, which provides a NIST SP 800-155-compliant BIOS, five years of BIOS and driver updates,

TPM 2.0 protection, a Kensington lock slot, and secure backup capabilities. A free one-year McAfee+ Premium membership adds an extra layer of protection. The ExpertCenter P500 Mini Tower meets military-grade durability standards, ensuring longevity for business use.

ASUS AI ExpertMeet enhances productivity with AI-powered meeting tools such as AI Meeting Minutes, which automatically records and organizes key discussion points, and AI Translated Subtitles, which provide real-time translations for multilingual teams.

The desktop offers modern connectivity options, including USB 3.2 Gen 1 Type-A and Type-C ports, HDMI® 1.4, DisplayPort™ 1.4, multiple USB 2.0 Type-A ports, a 1G LAN (RJ-45) port, and 7.1-channel audio output. It supports WiFi 6 (2x2) for fast wireless connectivity and is powered by either a 180W (80 PLUS® Bronze) or 330W (80 PLUS® Platinum) power supply.

Compact and measuring 296 x 155 x 347mm at 6kg, the ExpertCenter P500 Mini Tower is ideal for modern offices.





HUAWEI Mate X6

Smartphone

PHP114,999

HUAWEI has officially introduced the Mate X6, a cutting-edge foldable smartphone that merges next-generation durability, AI-enhanced photography, and multi-tasking capabilities in a sleek, lightweight form factor. As a leader in foldable innovation, HUAWEI continues to push the boundaries of design and engineering, offering a superior large-screen experience without compromising portability or resilience.

The Mate X6 is built with 2nd Generation KUNLUN Glass on its exterior screen, providing 25 times more drop resistance than previous models. This advanced glass network structure enhances resilience against cracks and deformation, ensuring durability in everyday use. The interior screen is reinforced with a carbon fiber composite laminated structure, offering an exceptional 380GPa deformation resistance, making it 65% stiffer than conventional materials to withstand continuous folding.

An aviation-grade aluminum middle frame strengthens the device's bend and compression resistance, making it more robust during impact tests. The multi-dimensional hinge, constructed from 1900MPa ultra-high-strength steel, is engineered to endure frequent folding without weakening, ensuring a seamless user experience over time.

To maintain peak performance, the Mate X6 incorporates an innovative cooling system with graphene film, a 3D VC heat spreader, and ultra-high thermal conductivity graphene, efficiently dissipating heat during intensive usage such as gaming or video calls. The device also boasts IPX8 water resistance, allowing it to withstand splashes and accidental exposure to water.

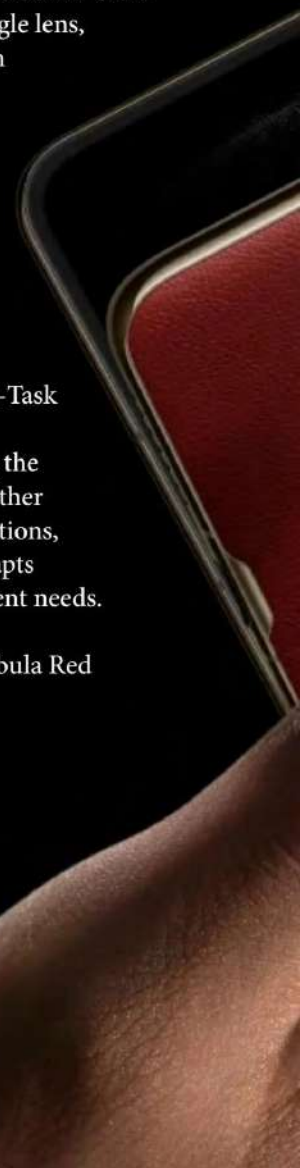
Despite its durability, the Mate X6 is remarkably lightweight, weighing just 239g and measuring 9.85mm thick when folded (slimming down to 4.6mm when

unfolded). It features a Space-Age Orbit camera layout and a vegan fiber finish, offering a premium tactile feel while maintaining an elegant, futuristic design.

The Mate X6's camera system introduces a 50MP Ultra Aperture Camera, a 40MP ultra-wide-angle lens, and a 48MP telephoto micro camera with advanced AI enhancements. Whether capturing sweeping landscapes, detailed close-ups, or high-resolution portraits, the camera system ensures professional-grade photography with enhanced image clarity and natural color reproduction.

For seamless productivity, the Live Multi-Task feature allows users to run up to three applications simultaneously, maximizing the device's expansive unfolded display. Whether video conferencing, working on presentations, or managing daily tasks, the Mate X6 adapts effortlessly to both work and entertainment needs.

The HUAWEI Mate X6 is available in Nebula Red and Black.







CASIO CRW-001

Digital Watch

PHP9,600

CASIO has introduced the CRW-001, a ring-style digital watch that pushes the boundaries of timepiece design. This revolutionary wearable integrates advanced miniaturization and precision metalworking, offering a completely new way to wear a watch while maintaining Casio's hallmark digital functionality.

The CRW-001 is built with a miniature watch module, reduced to just one-tenth the size of a standard watch module. To achieve this, Casio employs high-density mounting technology, allowing the timekeeping system to fit within a compact, lightweight ring. The watch is crafted using metal injection molding (MIM), a high-precision metal processing technique that enables the creation of a full-metal ring, case, and case back as a single unit. This ensures durability while faithfully replicating Casio's iconic design elements, including the recognizable dimpled pattern seen on traditional Casio watches.

To enhance its resilience, the CRW-001 features a glass adhesive sealing technique, making it water-resistant while maintaining a sleek and minimalistic three-button design for intuitive function switching.

Despite its small size, the CRW-001 offers a 6-digit digital LCD display capable of showing time down to the second, calendar functions, dual time display, and stopwatch capabilities. A unique pulsing light feature activates on the hour and at preset times, adding an artistic touch that mimics the twinkling passage of time.

The CRW-001 is designed to fit a size 22 finger (US 10.5, EU U) with an inner diameter of 20mm and a circumference of 62.8mm. To ensure a comfortable fit for different users, two adjustable spacers are included: size 19 (19mm inner diameter) and size 16 (18mm inner diameter).



This new ring-style digital watch draws inspiration from Casio's first major product—the yubiwa pipe, a ring-style cigarette holder developed in 1946. This innovative accessory became a hit in post-war Japan and helped fund Casio's transition into the world of electronic timepieces. The CRW-001 pays homage to that original design while embracing modern technology to create an entirely new watch-wearing experience.

It is available through Casio PH's website and select authorized retailers. For full specifications and purchasing details, visit www.casio.com/ph.

GARMIN DESCENT X50i

Dive Computer **PHP 94,990**

GARMIN introduces the Descent X50i, its most advanced large-format dive computer, featuring a 3-inch vivid color touchscreen display for enhanced underwater visibility. Designed for both technical and recreational divers, the Descent X50i integrates cutting-edge features, including SubWave™ sonar technology, a 20 ATM dive rating, and real-time diver-to-diver communication, making it one of the most sophisticated dive computers available.

The Descent X50i is built with a strong sapphire lens, leakproof metal buttons, and a backup dive light, allowing divers to explore deep-sea environments with confidence. Its dual elastic bands with an arrowhead buckle attachment provide a secure, adjustable fit that prevents slipping, even in challenging underwater conditions.

With SubWave™ sonar technology, divers can monitor their own tank pressure or track up to eight nearby divers (within 10 meters) using a Descent T2 transceiver. This allows for real-time tracking of depth, distance, and tank pressure, enhancing safety when diving in low-visibility conditions. Diver-to-diver preset messaging is also supported,

enabling communication up to 30 meters away.

The Descent X50i is designed for extensive dive planning and real-time data tracking. DiveView™ maps offer preloaded bathymetric depth contours and access to over 4,000 dive sites worldwide. An in-dive depth chart and history help divers track their explored locations, while the ascent dive profile visualizes a projected depth plan with real-time Time-To-Surface (TTS) calculations, decompression stops, and gas switches.

Before heading out, divers can check tide data to monitor ocean conditions. The 3D dive compass aids underwater navigation, ensuring precise orientation throughout a dive.

Above the surface, the Garmin Dive™ app allows divers to review dive logs, track gear, and take notes. A built-in GPS navigation system provides detailed mapping of 4,000+ dive sites and enables users to record and mark entry and exit points with satellite accuracy. Users can also add custom points of interest to DiveView™ maps for future reference.



REDMI NOTE 14 PRO | PRO+ 5G

Smartphone

PHP19,999 – Note 14 Pro

PHP24,999 – Note 14 Pro+

XIAOMI has officially launched the Redmi Note 14 Pro and Pro+ 5G, bringing unmatched durability and rugged design to the smartphone market. Featuring IP68-certified water and dust resistance, these devices can withstand submersion in up to 1.5 meters of water for 30 minutes, making them ideal for users who need a phone that can handle unpredictable conditions.



The Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2 protects the 6.67-inch AMOLED display, offering superior scratch resistance and durability. The screen remains fully responsive even when exposed to water or oily fingers, ensuring seamless usability in all conditions.

Built for resilience, the Redmi Note 14 Pro and Pro+ incorporate an All-Star Armor Structure, consisting of a high-strength aluminum composite frame, energy-absorbing foam, and four-corner internal reinforcement to safeguard the device against drops and shocks. Internally, the 0.8mm thickened motherboard further enhances impact resistance, protecting essential components from damage.

Beyond durability, these devices also deliver high-end performance. Powered by the latest 5G-enabled processors, they ensure smooth multitasking, gaming, and media consumption. The advanced cooling system prevents overheating during intense usage.

With flagship-level camera systems, the Redmi Note 14 Pro and Pro+ capture stunning images with their high-resolution main cameras, enhanced by AI-powered optimizations. Users can take crystal-clear photos in various lighting conditions while leveraging multiple photography modes.

The long-lasting battery supports fast charging, ensuring that users stay powered throughout the day. Combined with MIUI's enhanced efficiency features, these phones provide extended usability without frequent recharges.

The Redmi Note 14 Pro and Pro+ 5G redefine durability, offering a robust, high-performance smartphone experience built to last. For more details, visit mi.com/ph.



OPPO RENO13 SERIES 5G

Smartphone

PHP22,999 - Reno13 F 5G (12+256GB)

PHP25,999 - Reno13 F 5G (12+512GB)

PHP34,999 - Reno13 5G

PHP43,999 - Reno13 Pro 5G

THE OPPO RENO13 SERIES 5G has arrived, offering AI-powered photography, industry-leading durability, and a sleek, stylish design. Built for those who love to explore and express themselves, this latest Reno series pushes the boundaries of smartphone imaging and performance.



The OPPO Reno13 Series 5G is the first in its class to feature an IP69 waterproof rating, making it highly resistant to water and dust. It enables underwater photography up to 2 meters deep for 30 minutes in fresh water, thanks to its specialized Underwater Photography Mode that optimizes focus, color, and contrast for distortion-free shots. The volume buttons function as shutter controls, ensuring ease of use while submerged.

Equipped with advanced camera systems, the Reno13 Pro 5G boasts a 50MP main camera, telephoto camera, and selfie camera, all with Auto-Focus for capturing sharp images in any scenario. It also includes an 8MP Ultra-Wide Angle Camera with a 116° field of view for breathtaking landscapes. The Reno13 5G features a 50MP main camera with a 1.8 focal length and a 90° field of view selfie camera, while the Reno13 F 5G enhances mobile photography with a 50MP main camera, 32MP selfie camera, and 8MP Ultra-Wide Angle Camera.

AI-powered features enhance every shot. AI Clarity Enhancer restores blurry or low-quality images, AI Unblur refines details and colors, and AI Reflection Remover eliminates unwanted reflections in mirror selfies or glass photography. The AI Livephoto feature ensures high-quality, aesthetic frames for social media-worthy content.

The Butterfly Shadow Design delivers a premium aesthetic with a combination of matte and glossy textures. Built with an aerospace-grade aluminum frame, the Reno13 Series 5G offers 20% better resistance to bending and 36% improved drop resistance, ensuring both durability and elegance.

Available in 3 variants — Reno13 F 5G, Reno13 5G, and Reno13 Pro 5G. Colors include Plume Purple, Luminous Blue, Graphite Grey, and Plume White, depending on the model.

The OPPO Reno13 Series 5G is available nationwide via official OPPO e-commerce stores on Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok, as well as authorized retail stores. For more information, visit [OPPO Philippines](https://www.oppo.com.ph).





EPSON SURECOLOR SC-F1030

Direct-to-Garment Printer



THE EPSON SURECOLOR SC-F1030 is a Direct-to-Garment (DTG) printer designed for small businesses and retail spaces that specialize in custom apparel, t-shirts, and promotional fabric prints. This model is Epson's smallest DTG printer, making it an excellent choice for shops with limited space. It features both Direct-to-Garment and Direct-to-Film (DTF) printing, allowing business owners to create full-sized designs for garments or smaller logos for transfers, depending on customer needs.

Equipped with PrecisionCore MicroTFP printhead technology, the SC-F1030 offers high-speed, high-

accuracy dot placement, ensuring crisp, vibrant prints with every use. Its Auto Gap Adjustment automatically detects and adjusts the platen height based on garment thickness, optimizing print quality for different fabric types. The textile ink system used in this printer produces rich, durable colors, perfect for creating long-lasting, high-quality apparel.

Designed with a compact footprint, the SC-F1030 can fit into small workspaces while still maintaining exceptional printing performance. Its front operation design allows easy access for maintenance and setup, while its wire-free placement at the

rear enables convenient positioning against walls or in tight corners. These features make it a powerful yet space-efficient solution for businesses aiming to offer customized apparel printing with minimal setup requirements.



Epson SureColor SC-V1030

UV Printer

THE EPSON SURECOLOR SC-V1030 is a compact UV printer designed for custom printing on a variety of materials, including wood, acrylic, stainless steel, and other non-paper surfaces. This printer enables businesses to expand their offerings beyond traditional paper and textile printing, making it ideal for gift shops, souvenir stores, and specialty product manufacturers.

With high-resolution printing capabilities, the SC-V1030 delivers sharp details even for fine text and thin lines, ensuring superior print quality on a wide range of products. It features an Auto Height Adjustment system that automatically adjusts the platen height to accommodate substrates up to 70mm thick, allowing for precise printing

on three-dimensional objects like golf balls, phone cases, and promotional merchandise. Additionally, the Wide Gap Function improves image clarity and text sharpness when printing on uneven or raised surfaces.

Designed for easy integration into retail and production spaces, the SC-V1030 has a small desktop footprint that fits easily on desks or workbenches, making it convenient for monitoring and managing print jobs. Its front operation design simplifies access and maintenance, while its compact form factor ensures efficiency in tight workspaces. Businesses looking to expand their product customization capabilities will find the SC-V1030 an excellent choice for creating high-quality, durable custom prints on specialty items.



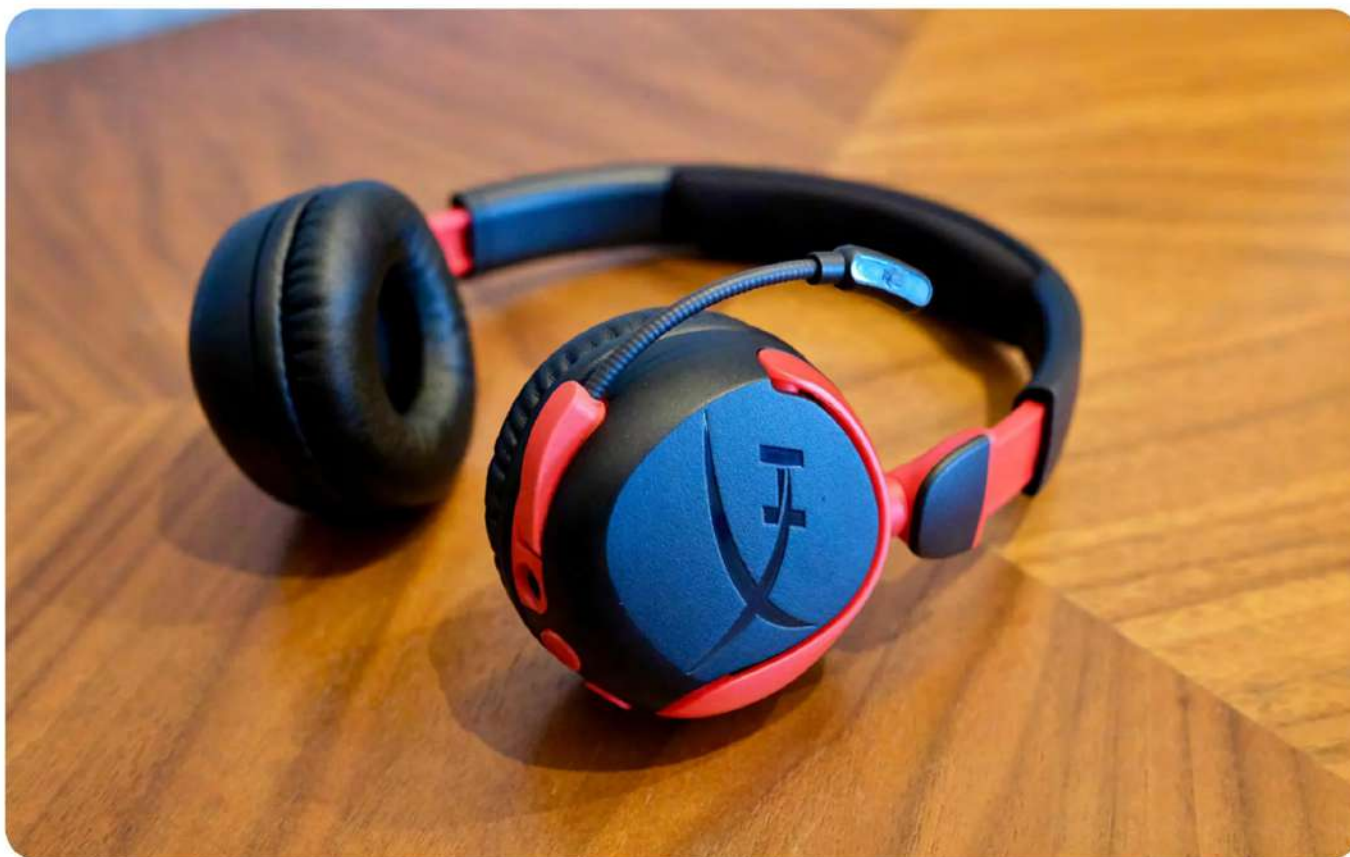
REVIEWED BY ISAAC JAMES ZAYCO

HYPERX CLOUD MINI

WIRELESS GAMING HEADSET



Finally, a headset designed for young gamers—the HyperX Cloud Mini! For us kids who love gaming and talking to our friends while playing, nothing could be more perfect!



DESIGN



The HyperX Cloud Mini headset is lightweight and portable. It has soft, padded earcups, which are also adjustable and rotational for easy handling. The headband has a soft padding as well and the size is extendable / adjustable. It has a tuck away boom microphone that can be bent to your preferred position. The Cloud Mini looks really cool with the edgy HyperX logo on the ear cups. This is available in black and white.



HARDWARE



With 30mm neodymium drivers, the HyperX Cloud Mini provides clear audio in a wide range of frequencies for an immersive audio experience. Volume limit is set at 85dB to ensure young kids who are into gaming don't damage their hearing. The tuck away boom microphone also has a flip-to-mute support.

The Cloud Mini can be used wireless via Bluetooth or can be used wired with the 3.5mm jack that it comes with.

It is compatible on multiple platforms such as PC, Chromebook, Nintendo Switch, PlayStation, Xbox, and more.

The headphones has up to 25 hours battery life which can last a couple of days before needing a recharge. In my testing, it can even go up to 27 hours. USB-A to USB-C charging cable is also provided in the package.

USER EXPERIENCE



By long-pressing the Bluetooth button on the headset, I was able to pair the HyperX Cloud Mini quickly to my laptop and use it for gaming.

It has a clear and balanced sound without unnecessary background noise. Even with the audio limit at 85dB, it is still loud enough. I can go through long gaming sessions with my friends without my ears feeling strained after, unlike other headphones that I have used. With the audio restriction, I am now more aware when other people are talking to me while I'm gaming (I used to be oblivious to other sounds when gaming, lol).

When I'm on calls, I can pull the microphone up to mute myself and I can easily pull it back down to unmute. This is very convenient during online games and calls and is also helpful to my parents and people around me when they see whether I'm muted or not.

I have used the HyperX Cloud Mini on various Roblox games, Minecraft, as well as audio and video calls with friends. It always provides rich, exceptional audio. I have also used it wired on my PS5 and Nintendo Switch and it has worked seamlessly.



VALUE



The HyperX Cloud Mini Wireless Gaming Headset retails at PHP3,295. This is good value for the price considering the various connectivity options it offers as well as compatibility to multiple platforms.





BOTTOMLINE

The HyperX Cloud Mini headphones is a thoughtfully-designed headset for young gamers. It is comfortable with really good audio that provides an immersive gaming experience for kids without damaging kids' ears. This is a sigma headset for kids and even adults.



SPECIFICATIONS

Weight: 0.29 lb

Cable Length (imperial) and type: 3.93 ft detachable headset cable. | 0.5 USB-C to USB-A charging cable

Bluetooth Version: 5.3

Driver: Custom dynamic, 30mm with neodymium magnets

Form Factor: On-ear/supra-aural, closed back.

Frequency Response: 20Hz-20kHz

Sensitivity: 83dBA at 1kHz

T.H.D: < 2%

Frame Type: Plastic

Ear Cushions: Memory foam and premium leatherette

Microphone: Element: Electret condenser microphone; Polar Pattern: Omnidirectional; Sensitivity: '-40.5dBV (0dB=1V/Pa at 1kHz)

Wireless Range: Up to 20 meters

Supported Bluetooth Codecs: AAC, SBC

Supported Bluetooth Profiles: AVRCP, A2DP, HFP, HSP

Battery Life: 25 hours

Charge Time: 2 hours

Bit-Depth: 16 bit

Audio Controls: In-line (volume and mic mute, sidetone on/off, Bluetooth® volume and multifunction buttons)

WHAT'S HOT

- ▶ The headphones are lightweight and comfortable even after extended use.
- ▶ Excellent and clear sound quality.
- ▶ Battery life is quite good.

WHAT'S NOT

- ▶ I noticed that I can pair this wirelessly to only one device at a time, so when switching to another device, I have to reconnect manually.

REVIEWED BY GABRIEL JOHN PE

JBL TOUR PRO 3

TRUE WIRELESS STEREO EARBUDS



JBL has always produced great-sounding headphones at a reasonable price. Over the years, I had my fair share of JBL headphones; they were a treat during my music-loving college days. But all my previous JBLs were wired headphones, so when I was offered to try JBL's latest flagship True Wireless Stereo (TWS) earbuds, the JBL Tour Pro 3, I jumped on the chance to see how the brand has fared so far in the wireless era.

DESIGN



Opening the box, you'll be greeted with the latest generation of JBL's Smart Charging case. Also included in the box are five pairs of replacement silicon ear tips and an extra foam pair. There's also a USB-C to 3.5mm cable for when you want to use the Smart Charging case as a transmitter, and finally, there's the USB-C cable for charging.

In terms of earbuds, the JBL Tour Pro 3 has a stemmed design, though its stem is not as pronounced as some other buds. The buds are also pretty light, at just 5.6g each. The Smart Charging Case is also pretty light at just 71.8g despite all the tech it has.

Finally, in terms of colorway, ours came in Black, but there's also a Latte variant that resembles more of a rose gold color than a latte.



HARDWARE



The main force behind the JBL Tour Pro 3 is its hybrid dual-driver system. There are two drivers within each earbud: a balance armature driver that handles the highs and a 10mm dynamic driver that handles the bass and vocals.

The Tour Pro 3 has nifty features such as JBL's True Adaptive Noise Cancellation 3.0 and JBL Spatial 360 with head tracking. What's great about these features is that they are easily accessible through the Smart Charging case or the JBL Headphones app.

Regarding battery life, the JBL Tour Pro 3 earbuds each have a 65mAh battery that can provide 11 hours of playback with the ANC off and 8 hours of playback with the ANC on. Meanwhile, the Smart Charger itself has an 850 mAh battery. A single charge of the smart charger can charge the device from 0 to 100 three times.

The JBL Tour Pro 3 is best used with the JBL Headphone app. Within the app, you can adjust the ANC, activate spatial audio, and play around with EQ settings. The Personi-Fi 3.0 feature within the JBL Headphone App also allows you to have a more personalized sound profile.





USER EXPERIENCE



The JBL Tour Pro 3 is unique. When I got my hands on our unit, the Smart Charging case immediately caught my attention. While the LCD display is a standout, I was more interested in how they fit the display into a reasonably sized case. Not just any regular fit, but the display was intuitive and surprisingly responsive.

Going to the earbuds themselves, the JBL Tour Pro 3 had a comfortable and secure fit. There's no sound leakage, so you can enjoy the loudest volumes to your heart's content.

One of my biggest disappointments with the Tour Pro 3 was the volume limitation. The device is limited to the volume of your connected device, and there is no way to increase or decrease the volume separate from your device.

Because of this limitation, I found myself wanting a bit more volume to fully enjoy the listening experience.

In terms of noise cancellation, the JBL Tour Pro 3 did a fantastic job of completely shutting down noise. The device managed to remove most of the ambient sounds during my train commutes. If you do need to switch modes, the Smart Charging case quickly gets the job done. There's no more fumbling about your phone to find the right app and settings.

Another unique feature I found myself using is the JBL Spatial 360. I enjoyed a few movies and series with spatial audio turned on. It's not the greatest out there, but when you're alone in a quiet room the feature does elevate your viewing experience.

Finally, regarding sound quality, the JBL Tour Pro 3 does a great job. The highs and vocals were amazing. The bass was also good, better than most earbuds, but I did find myself wanting a bit more oomph.

The JBL Tour Pro 3 was easy to set up. Its quick pair feature allows you to set up and use the device immediately. Connecting to the JBL Headphone app was seamless

as well. There's a slight delay from when you connect the earbuds to your phone to when the app recognizes that the device is already connected.

VALUE



Coming in at PHP16,999, the JBL Tour Pro 3 has a steep asking price compared to its competition. While it has a larger driver than most competitors, the volume and sound quality feel lacking in some aspects, although not by much. That said, the JBL Tour Pro 3 remains flagship quality earbuds worth considering.

BOTTOMLINE

If you're in the market for a feature-packed TWS earbud, the JBL Tour Pro 3 is a strong contender. With exceptional ANC, a unique Smart Charging Case, and high-quality sound, it stands out as a premium option. While the price point is on the higher side, the overall package makes it a worthy consideration for audiophiles and tech enthusiasts alike.



SPECIFICATIONS

Drivers: 10.2 mm/ 0.402" Dynamic Driver + 5.1 mm x 2.8 mm Balanced Armature

Number of Microphones: 6

Dynamic frequency response range: 20 Hz - 40 kHz

Impedance: 32 ohms

Connectivity: Bluetooth 5.3, USB-C

Water resistance: IP55

Weight: 5.6g (earbuds), 71.8 (smart charging case), 83g (buds and charger)

Battery life: 11hrs (earbuds, ANC off), 8 hrs (earbuds, ANC on) 33hrs (Case)

WHAT'S HOT

- ▶ Battery life
- ▶ Smart Charging Case
- ▶ ANC and Spatial Audio
- ▶ Hybrid Dual Driver system

WHAT'S NOT

- ▶ Price

REVIEWED BY ALJHELYN PIADOR

LENOVO IDEAPAD SLIM 5X

LAPTOP



We've seen smartphones, smartwatches, smart rings, and, of course, smart people. But in this age of ever-evolving tech, Lenovo dares to be SmartER.

Enter the Lenovo IdeaPad Slim 5x (14", Gen 9)—a laptop designed for portability, AI-powered intelligence, and long-lasting efficiency. But how smart is it, really? I put it through its paces for productivity, entertainment, and daily work. Here's the lowdown.



DESIGN



If Apple's MacBook is the trendsetter in a designer suit, then the Lenovo IdeaPad Slim 5x is the business-casual professional—clean, functional, but not necessarily a head-turner. At just 1.48kg and 16.9mm thin, this laptop is built for people who are always on the move. Whether you're a student dashing between classes, a freelancer bouncing between coffee shops, or a corporate warrior commuting to the office, this laptop won't weigh you down.

Adding to its appeal is military-grade durability (MIL-STD-810H certification), meaning it can handle daily bumps, shakes, and accidental drops without flinching. The hinge flexes up to 162 degrees, which is great for adjusting in different work settings—whether you're giving a presentation or just slouching on the couch.

However, if you like your gadgets to double as fashion statements, the IdeaPad Slim 5x might feel a bit too understated. It comes in two professional colors—Cloud Grey and Abyss Blue. Classy? Yes. Eye-catching? Not really.



HARDWARE



Don't let its slim design fool you—this laptop is a powerhouse. Powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon X Plus processor, it offers impressive speed and efficiency with 45 trillion operations per second (TOPS), ensuring tasks are optimized in real-time for a seamless, lag-free experience. Whether you're handling multiple browser tabs, editing documents, or streaming content, the IdeaPad Slim 5x keeps up without breaking a sweat. That said, there are some challenges with certain Windows apps. For instance, while Adobe Photoshop runs, it can be

slow, and some features may be missing. Canva's web version works smoothly, but the Windows app sometimes struggles. Additionally, streaming apps like Netflix and Disney+ can have playback issues, likely due to performance limitations.

And let me tell you—the 14-inch OLED display is a total showstopper. With 100% DCI-P3 color accuracy, deep blacks, and vivid visuals, it's an absolute treat for work and play. As someone who loves animated movies bursting with color, I was hooked. Whether you're watching films, editing photos, or just doomscrolling, everything pops. Plus, low blue light technology means you can

binge-watch guilt-free without frying your eyeballs.

Speaking of long hours and eye strain—battery life is solid. Lenovo packed in a 57Whr battery, which lasts an entire workday without hunting for an outlet. There's a café I adore but avoid because it has no sockets, so I took this laptop there as a test. Verdict? My to-do list was conquered, and the laptop still had juice left. Need a quick boost? Rapid Charge technology, using the 65W USB-C Slim wall adapter, provides a quick power boost for hours of use.

The speakers, though? Meh. Powered by Dolby Audio, they're decent but lack that deep bass and rich sound for an immersive experience. They'll get you through Zoom calls and casual YouTube watching, but if you love high-quality audio, invest in headphones.

USER EXPERIENCE



Every gadget these days brags about AI features, but do they actually help? In the case of the IdeaPad Slim 5x, I'm happy to report that the AI is actually useful. One standout is the dedicated button for Microsoft Copilot, acting like a one-click helper.

For starters, AI optimizes multitasking like a pro. If you constantly juggle



tasks, you'll appreciate how this laptop predicts your usage patterns and boosts performance accordingly. Whether it's Microsoft Copilot organizing your docs or AI-driven battery management keeping you unplugged longer, the difference is noticeable

For students and remote workers, the AI-enhanced video and audio features are game-changers. The laptop auto-adjusts camera settings for better lighting during video calls, so even if you're stuck in a dimly lit room, you'll still look presentable.

VALUE



At PHP71,995 the Lenovo IdeaPad Slim 5x offers solid features, but the price-to-performance ratio raises some questions. You're getting AI-enhanced functionality, a stunning OLED display, and impressive battery life—features typically found in more expensive ultrabooks. However, the overall package doesn't feel like a significant leap from lower-priced Lenovo models.

Having used Lenovo laptops for a while, I've noticed that while they are generally reliable, the pricing differences between models don't always align with major performance improvements. The IdeaPad Slim 5x is certainly a capable machine, but compared to alternatives in this price range, some competitors offer stronger

speakers, more striking designs, or similar specs at a slightly lower cost.

For those prioritizing portability and AI-driven efficiency, this laptop holds its own. But if you're looking purely at performance per peso, it's worth exploring other options before committing.

The Lenovo IdeaPad Slim 5x (14, Gen 9) is a fantastic everyday laptop that balances portability, AI-powered performance, and long-lasting battery life. It's not trying to be a high-end gaming beast or a luxury ultrabook, but what it does, it does exceptionally well. If you need a lightweight, powerful laptop for work, entertainment, and travel, this is one of 2024's best options.

BOTTOMLINE

The Lenovo IdeaPad Slim 5x (14, Gen 9) is a fantastic everyday laptop that balances portability, AI-powered performance, and long-lasting battery life. It's not trying to be a high-end gaming beast or a luxury ultrabook, but what it does, it does exceptionally well. If you need a lightweight, powerful laptop for work, entertainment, and travel, this is one of 2024's best options.

Would I personally use this laptop? Yes—it's a capable, travel-friendly device that balances performance, efficiency, and smart features. It's well-suited for work, study, and entertainment, making it a solid choice for everyday use.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Processor:** Snapdragon X Plus (8-core, up to 3.4GHz)
- AI:** Integrated Qualcomm Hexagon NPU (up to 45 TOPS)¹
- Memory:** 32GB LPDDR5x (soldered, not upgradable)
- Storage:** 1TB SSD M.2 PCIe 4.0
- Display:** 14" WUXGA (1920x1200) OLED, 400 nits
- Graphics:** Integrated Qualcomm Adreno GPU
- Battery:** 57Wh
- Weight:** Starting at 1.48 kg (3.26 lbs)
- OS:** Windows 11 Home (on ARM)
- Ports:** 2x USB-C, 2x USB-A, HDMI 2.1, microSD
- Other:** Dolby Audio, 1080p camera, Wi-Fi 7 + Bluetooth 5.4

WHAT'S HOT

- ▶ Lightweight & durable
- ▶ AI-powered performance.
- ▶ Stunning OLED display
- ▶ Long battery life & Rapid Charge
- ▶ WiFi 7 & versatile ports

WHAT'S NOT

- ▶ Subtle design
- ▶ Speakers lack depth.
- ▶ Price-to-performance gap



REVIEWED BY PHIA MANUELL LAYOSO

REDMI NOTE 14 PRO+ 5G

SMARTPHONE



Xiaomi's Redmi series has a good track record of offering high-end smartphones at budget-friendly prices. Its latest addition to the family, the Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G, is positioned to set a new benchmark in the mid-range category with its better specs and best-in-class features. From its 200MP ultra-clear camera to its 6.67-inch CrystalRes AMOLED display, this phone promises an immersive experience that's on par with even some flagships.





DESIGN



The Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G has a slim, trendy design with a thin, premium finish that feels great. It is available in bold color choices, such as Midnight Black, Lavender Purple, and Frost Blue, giving users fashionable options to suit their preferences. The device measures 162.53mm in height, 74.67mm in width, and 8.75mm (Glass) / 8.85mm (PU) in thickness. Weighing 210.14g (Glass) / 205.13g (PU), it has a sturdy yet ergonomic construction.

From the moment I held the device, I appreciated how well-balanced it felt despite its larger screen size. The subtly curved edges assist with easy grip, and the glass back with a premium feel gives it a sense of sophistication. The Midnight Black is sleek and elegant in a traditional style, but Frost Blue and Lavender Purple offer a clean, contemporary design. Although it is not the thinnest phone on the market, the balance of comfort and durability makes it a joy to use daily.

The instant it is turned on, the 6.67-inch 1.5K CrystalRes AMOLED display is impressive at once. TÜV Rheinland Low Blue Light certification guarantees that hours of use won't tire the eyes, and it's ideal for binge-watching, gaming, or business use. Colors pop, blacks are rich, and details are edge-of-sharp, presenting an immersive experience. When you scroll through social media or watch high-definition videos, the screen really takes every experience with the phone to a whole new level.





HARDWARE



Beneath the hood, the Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G comes with the Snapdragon 7s Gen 3, an Octa-core processor clocked at a maximum of 2.5GHz. Our review unit came with 12GB of RAM and 512GB of internal storage. The device offers seamless and lag-free performance, as well as multitasking and productivity operations without any hassles.

Battery life is also impressive with its 5110mAh battery. Better yet, the 120W HyperCharge technology allows me to quickly go from zero to a full charge, reducing downtime and keeping me connected all day.

The most significant selling point of the Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G is its 200MP primary camera with OIS. In well-lit

conditions, the level of detail captured is staggering, with even zoomed shots remaining clear. The Optical Image Stabilization (OIS) helps to keep low-light photos crisp and blur-free. AI Image Editing makes photos look better after taking them, and it's easy to correct lighting, erase unwanted objects, and fine-tune every shot.

Recording videos on this phone is a delight. With OIS and AI optimization, videos come out smooth and crisp. Whether recording in 4K or slow-motion, the Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G has the best quality, making it an excellent option for content creators and everyday users.

USER EXPERIENCE



As a mid-ranger, the Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G offers fantastic value without holding

back on performance or design. Every feature feels thoughtfully implemented, from the display to the camera, ensuring a flagship-like experience at a fraction of the cost.

Daily use of this phone has been smooth and pleasant. The blend of a fast processor, high-definition screen, and quick charging ensures I never feel laggy. The IP68 rating assures me that it can withstand sudden spills or exposure to dust. Additionally, the MIUI operating system is smooth and customizable, enabling me to personalize the phone to my preference.

For anyone looking for a fast, efficient, and feature-packed smartphone without breaking the bank, this phone offers an unmatched experience in its segment. If you are a gamer, a camera buff, or just someone who needs a reliable daily driver, the Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G is a great option.





VALUE



The Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G starts at PHP24,999 for the 12GB + 512GB variant, making it one of the most compelling mid-range options available. Its flagship-worthy features, such as a high-quality 200MP camera, Snapdragon 7s Gen 3

chip, and 120W HyperCharge deliver top-notch value for its price range.

BOTTOMLINE

Overall, the Redmi Note 14 Pro+ 5G is a powerhouse mid-range phone that delivers exceptional value. It is an excellent choice for users who demand flagship-level features at a reasonable price point.



SPECIFICATIONS

Processor: Snapdragon® 7s Gen 3 Mobile Platform

Display: 6.67" 1.5K CrystalRes AMOLED, TÜV Rheinland Certified

Camera: 200MP (OIS) main camera

Battery: 5110mAh with 120W HyperCharge

AI Features: AI Image Editing, AI Productivity Tools

Durability: IP68 dust and water resistance

OS: MIUI based on Android

Storage Options: 256GB / 512GB (Non-expandable)

Audio: Dual speakers, Supports Dolby Atmos

Connectivity: 5G, Wi-Fi 6, Bluetooth 5.3, NFC, USB-C

Dimensions: 162.53mm (H) x 74.67mm (W) x 8.75mm (Glass) / 8.85mm (PU)

Weight: 210.14g (Glass) / 205.13g (PU)

WHAT'S HOT

- ▶ CrystalRes AMOLED display
- ▶ 200MP camera with OIS
- ▶ Snapdragon 7s Gen 3 processor
- ▶ 120W HyperCharge
- ▶ AI-powered enhancements
- ▶ Sleek and premium design

WHAT'S NOT

- ▶ Bloatware



TEST DRIVE

WORDS BY GIAN DEREK BAMBICO

TESLA MODEL 3





Tesla Philippines recently gave us the opportunity to experience the entry-level Model 3, and after an exhilarating test drive, I had only one question in mind: How soon can I get one? The Model 3 not only met but exceeded my expectations with its cutting-edge technology, sleek design, and impressive performance—solidifying its place as a game-changer in the electric vehicle (EV) space.

**DESIGN**

The car's futuristic design turned heads as I navigated through BGC's heavy traffic, adding a touch of flair to my drive. Its low-profile, coupe-like silhouette, striking lights, and flush door handles give it an avant-garde, almost cyberpunk aesthetic. Beyond its visual appeal, the vehicle's aerodynamic build enhances efficiency, making it as practical as it is stylish.

Inside, the minimalist interior belies the barrage of advanced technology. The long, arching dash lines and soft-touch materials create an undeniably premium feel—even in the base model. The faux leather upholstery is a step above competitors, with the white leather option offering a non-stick, stain-resistant finish that's both luxurious and easy to maintain.

One of Tesla's best features is its customization options. Buyers can choose their preferred paint, wheel size, and interior color, allowing you to give the impression that your significant other is making all the decisions. After all, it doesn't matter who picks the options—as long as they're on board with you getting one in the first place!







15.4" Center Touchscreen



Wireless Charging

EQUIPMENT



The Model 3 comes packed with an impressive suite of driver-assist features, including Lane Keep Assist, Forward Collision Warning, Adaptive Cruise Control, and Vehicle Surroundings Monitoring. These features not only enhance safety but also make driving in chaotic urban environments like Manila a breeze.

Creature comforts abound, starting with the 15.4-inch central touchscreen, which serves as the hub for virtually all vehicle functions. Rear passengers are treated to their own 8-inch touchscreen, while features like heated and ventilated front seats, a heated steering wheel, ambient cabin lighting, and a panoramic glass roof elevate the experience even further.

One of the most remarkable features is Tesla's remote access, which allows owners to control the car using their smartphone. This function lets drivers use their phone as a key, pre-condition the cabin before entering, and plan routes with integrated charging stops. Charging is another standout aspect, with Supercharging capabilities allowing a maximum charge rate of 250 kW, adding up to 193 km (120 miles) of range in just 15 minutes—a significant advantage in the EV market.

USER EXPERIENCE



As a full electric vehicle, the Model 3 operates quietly, enhancing the overall driving experience. With 330Nm of torque and a maximum output of 279 horsepower, it delivers more than enough power for effortless overtaking and smooth acceleration.

That said, transitioning from a gas-powered car to an EV like the Model 3 takes some adjustment. Think of it like riding a bike for the first time.

The car's responsiveness mirrors the force exerted on the accelerator, which initially caused some jerky movements as I learned to modulate the pedal. This led to a few nauseous moments, but I quickly got the hang of it, relearning how to release the accelerator with finesse.

Another standout feature is the lack of traditional maintenance requirements. Unlike combustion-engine vehicles, the Model 3 doesn't need oil changes or periodic servicing. It's like buying a smartphone—just charge it and go.



8" Touchscreen Rear Display



Cup Holders



Charge Port







Electric Tail Gate

360-degree Acoustic Glass



VALUE



As of this writing, the Model 3 is priced at PHP2.109 million for the entry-level Rear-Wheel Drive variant, PHP2.489 million for the Long Range All-Wheel Drive, and PHP3.099 million for the top-of-the-line Performance All-Wheel Drive. Compared to competitors offering EVs at higher price points, Tesla delivers an accessible, feature-packed alternative.

Tesla's comprehensive warranty adds further value, with a basic vehicle warranty covering 4 years or 80,000 km, and 8 years or 160,000 km for the battery unit. This ensures long-term ownership remains worry-free, covering the most critical components.



BOTTOM LINE

For many of us who dreamed of owning an electric car decades ago, Tesla has made that vision a reality. However, practical considerations such as budget, lifestyle compatibility, and long-term maintenance remain crucial factors when deciding whether an EV fits your needs.

Fortunately, the Tesla Model 3 ticks all the right boxes—stunning design, cutting-edge technology, excellent performance, and competitive pricing. With more EV charging stations emerging in the Philippines, the shift toward electric mobility is becoming increasingly viable. If you're in the market for an EV that offers top-tier innovation at a competitive price, the Tesla Model 3 is a must-consider option.

TEST DRIVE

HONDA CR-V RS e:HEV E-CVT

WORDS BY GIAN DEREK BAMBICO



The Honda CR-V has long been a favorite in the compact SUV segment, offering a well-rounded combination of practicality, comfort, and performance. With the introduction of the CR-V RS e:HEV E-CVT, Honda has taken things a step further by blending hybrid efficiency with a sportier driving experience. As the flagship electrified variant in the lineup, it promises a premium feel, advanced technology, and the benefits of hybrid mobility. After driving one for over a year, we evaluate how it stacks up in the evolving market of electrified SUVs.



DESIGN



The Honda CR-V RS e:HEV boasts a more aggressive and premium aesthetic compared to its predecessors. Its design appeals not only to sophisticated titos but also to young families seeking a spacious hybrid SUV. The RS trim elevates the sporty appeal with a blacked-out grille, sleek LED headlights, 19-inch alloy wheels, and gloss-black side mirrors. The aerodynamic silhouette is complemented by a sculpted hood and bold character lines, giving the CR-V a commanding presence on the road.

At the rear, the LED taillights feature a signature design, while RS-exclusive elements like black bumper accents and roof rails further distinguish it from standard variants. Overall, the CR-V RS e:HEV strikes a perfect balance between sophisticated elegance and rugged sportiness, making it one of the most stylish compact SUVs in its class.

EQUIPMENT



Stepping inside the cabin, the CR-V RS e:HEV exudes a premium and modern feel. The leather-wrapped steering wheel, ambient lighting, and brushed aluminum accents elevate the interior's sophistication. The seats, wrapped in high-quality leather with red contrast stitching, offer both comfort and a sporty appeal.

Tech-wise, the CR-V RS e:HEV is well-equipped with a 9-inch infotainment touchscreen that supports Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. While it features wireless Apple CarPlay, it would've been a plus to include wireless Android Auto as well—a feature increasingly common in its segment. A 10.2-inch fully digital instrument cluster delivers crisp and customizable driving information, while the wireless charging pad, multiple USB-C ports, and a 12-speaker Bose premium audio system cater to tech-savvy drivers and passengers.



TEST DRIVE

Honda has also packed the CR-V RS e:HEV with Honda SENSING, its advanced driver-assistance system. Features such as adaptive cruise control, collision mitigation braking, lane-keeping assist, and blind-spot monitoring ensure a safer and more confident drive. Additionally, the 360-degree camera system aids maneuverability, especially in tight urban spaces.

While the CR-V's tech is top-tier, its hefty price tag leaves room for additional features that could set it apart from competitors. For instance, a self-parking feature or an all-wheel-drive option in the e:HEV variant would give this top-of-the-line model a competitive edge.

USER EXPERIENCE



Driving the CR-V RS e:HEV offers a unique blend of performance and efficiency. The hybrid system combines a 2.0-liter Atkinson-cycle gasoline engine with two electric motors, delivering a combined output of 207 horsepower and 335Nm of torque. Unlike traditional hybrids, the CR-V's e:HEV system predominantly operates in electric mode at lower speeds, with the gasoline engine acting primarily as a generator.

Acceleration is smooth and instantaneous, thanks to the electric motor's immediate torque delivery. Whether in city driving or highway cruising, the CR-V RS e:HEV provides a refined and quiet ride. The E-CVT transmission ensures seamless power delivery, and switching between driving modes—EV, Hybrid, and Engine Drive—allows drivers to optimize fuel efficiency or performance as needed.

That said, the CR-V can feel noisier and slightly sluggish when pushed hard, particularly under full throttle. However, for most owners navigating EDSA traffic, prioritizing fuel efficiency over outright speed is a reasonable trade-off.

The ride quality is impressive, with the suspension well-tuned to absorb road imperfections while maintaining stability. The electronic power steering is light yet responsive, making the CR-V easy to maneuver in urban environments while remaining composed at higher speeds. The regenerative braking system is well-calibrated, providing a natural braking feel without abrupt deceleration.





VALUE



In the Philippine market, the Honda CR-V RS e:HEV E-CVT commands a premium price of PHP2,605,000. However, it delivers an exceptional blend of luxury, technology, and fuel efficiency. With an estimated fuel economy of 20-25km/L in mixed driving conditions, it significantly reduces running costs compared to purely gasoline-powered counterparts.

Compared to rivals, the CR-V RS e:HEV holds its own with a premium cabin, a sporty driving experience, and Honda's reputation for reliability. While its price tag may be steep, the long-term savings in fuel and maintenance, combined with its high-end features, justify the investment for buyers seeking an electrified yet practical SUV.

Additionally, Honda Philippines offers an 8-year warranty for the hybrid battery, ensuring peace of mind for prospective owners. The availability of nationwide service centers further strengthens the CR-V's appeal as a worry-free hybrid option.



BOTTOM LINE

The Honda CR-V RS e:HEV E-CVT is a standout choice for those seeking a hybrid SUV that doesn't compromise on performance, comfort, or technology. With its sporty design, cutting-edge features, and efficient yet powerful hybrid system, it presents an attractive option for eco-conscious buyers who also value driving enjoyment.

For those considering a step into hybrid mobility without sacrificing the premium SUV experience, the CR-V RS e:HEV is an excellent choice. It's more than just a fuel-saving vehicle—it's a well-rounded, high-tech, and stylish hybrid that sets new benchmarks in the electrified SUV segment in the Philippines.



WORDS BY GIAN DEREK BAMBICO

NISSAN KICKS E-POWER VL

The Nissan Kicks e-POWER is Nissan Philippines' foray into the hybrid-electric crossover segment, offering an electrified driving experience without the need for external charging. Positioned as an eco-friendly yet practical alternative to conventional gasoline-powered SUVs, the Kicks promises improved fuel efficiency, a smooth ride, and a futuristic touch. But, having had one in our garage for a couple of months, are we happy with this purchase?



DESIGN



At first glance, the Nissan Kicks stands out with its dynamic and sporty styling. The signature V-motion grille dominates the front, flanked by sharp LED headlamps and daytime running lights. Its two-tone body color options, blacked-out pillars, and floating roof design give it a contemporary edge. The 17-inch alloy wheels complete the crossover's aggressive yet refined stance. However, I did find the wheel width a bit thin for my taste; that's why an upgrade was necessary from 205 to 215, which in my opinion, gives the Kicks a more rugged look. While its compact proportions make it city-friendly, the bold lines and sculpted bodywork give it an athletic appeal befitting its segment.

Inside, the cabin presents a clean and modern layout with a driver-centric dashboard. Soft-touch materials are present on high-contact areas, and the well-bolstered seats provide good support. The cabin space is decent for a subcompact crossover, offering ample headroom and legroom for front and rear passengers. Nissan has done a good job of

making the interior feel more premium than its price point suggests, with a combination of sleek design elements and practical ergonomics.

The asymmetrical rear-end design, while modern, feels less cohesive compared to the front. A more balanced design could have elevated the Kicks' overall appeal, making it look like a true all-rounder rather than a scaled-down Ariya.

EQUIPMENT



The Nissan Kicks comes well-equipped across all variants. The range-topping VL variant boasts a digital instrument cluster, an 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system with wired Apple CarPlay and wired Android Auto, and a keyless entry system with push-start ignition. The infotainment system is responsive and intuitive, though it would have been better with a slightly larger screen. The inclusion of physical buttons for climate control ensures easy access to key functions while driving.

Safety is also a priority, with Nissan's Intelligent Mobility suite offering features



such as Intelligent Forward Collision Warning, Blind Spot Monitoring, and a 360-degree camera offering unparalleled visibility in tight spaces—a boon for city drivers. The lane departure warning helps enhance driver confidence, particularly during long highway drives. While the standard cruise control is functional, the absence of adaptive cruise control is a missed opportunity. Adaptive cruise control would have reduced driver fatigue on long highway drives, making the Kicks even more appealing for road trips.

TEST DRIVE



Leather Seats With Contrast Stitching

Meanwhile, the hill start assist and traction control provide additional convenience and security in varying driving conditions.

Comfort-wise, the leather-wrapped steering wheel, automatic climate control, and ergonomic seats make for a premium feel inside the cabin. The seats are well-cushioned and provide good lumbar support, making long drives more comfortable. The rear seats can also be folded down to expand the cargo area, adding to the crossover's practicality.

USER EXPERIENCE



Driving the Kicks is a unique experience, thanks to its e-POWER technology. Unlike traditional hybrids, the 1.2L gasoline engine functions solely as a generator for the electric motor, which drives the wheels. This results in an EV-like driving feel, with instant torque and seamless acceleration. The e-Pedal mode allows for one-pedal driving, making stop-and-go traffic more manageable. Ride comfort is commendable, with a well-balanced suspension setup that absorbs road imperfections effectively. Handling is light yet responsive, making it ideal for both city commutes and long highway cruises.

Acceleration — a lot of it — is brisk and snappy for a crossover of this size. The electric motor delivers 134-horsepower and 280Nm of torque, which results

in a smooth and quiet ride. Unlike conventional gas-powered vehicles, there is no transmission lag, as the power is delivered directly to the wheels. This makes overtaking on highways effortless and ensures a confident driving experience.

Another highlight is the sound insulation. Even when the gasoline engine kicks in to recharge the battery, the noise is well-dampened, ensuring that passengers are not disturbed by sudden mechanical vibrations. The



sound insulation is notably better than many rivals in its class, making the Kicks a quieter and more refined option for daily commutes.



V-Motion Grille Design



e-Pedal Step



Electronic Gear Selector with Illumination



VALUE



With a price tag of PHP1,544,000, it is priced competitively in the hybrid and subcompact crossover segments. The Nissan Kicks e-Power VL offers a compelling balance of efficiency, technology, and driving pleasure. Its fuel economy is outstanding, easily achieving over 20km/L in mixed driving conditions. Factor in the reduced maintenance costs compared to traditional gasoline engines, and the Kicks quickly becomes an attractive option for buyers looking for an economical yet modern vehicle. The absence of an external charging requirement also makes it a practical choice for those hesitant to switch to full EVs.

Compared to its rivals in the subcompact crossover market, the Kicks holds its own. While it may not have the off-road capabilities of some competitors, it more

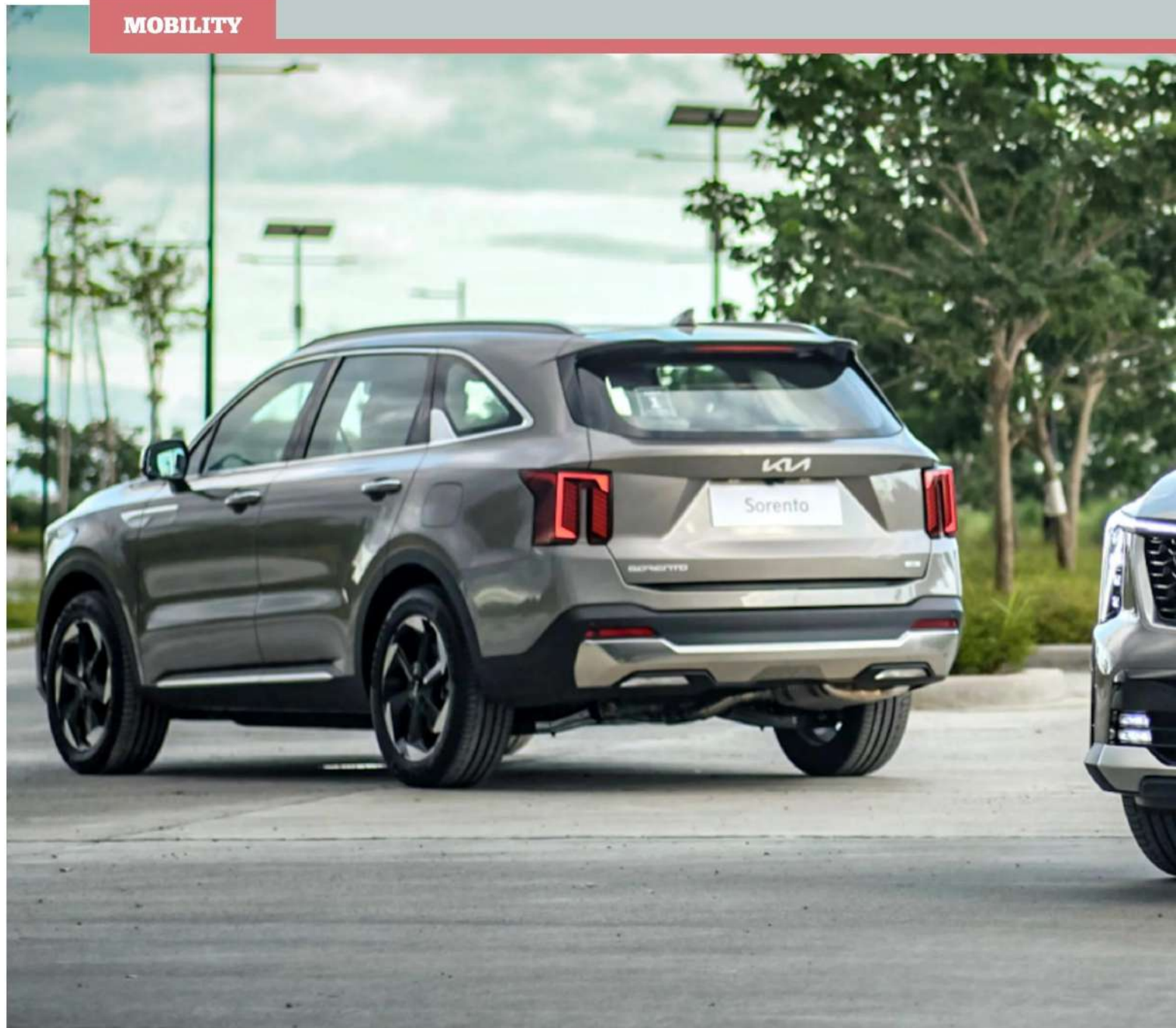
than makes up for it with its smooth ride, advanced tech features, and fuel efficiency. The total cost of ownership is also lower, as Nissan's e-POWER system has fewer moving parts than a traditional internal combustion engine, leading to reduced maintenance expenses over time.

Additionally, Nissan Philippines offers a strong aftersales support system, with a five-year battery warranty and competitive service packages. This provides peace of mind to buyers who may be concerned about the long-term reliability of hybrid technology.

BOTTOM LINE

The Nissan Kicks e-POWER is a game-changer for the Philippine market, blending the benefits of an electric drivetrain with the convenience of a gasoline generator. It delivers impressive fuel efficiency, modern tech features, and a refined driving experience at a competitive price point. For buyers who want to future-proof their purchase without fully committing to EV ownership, the Kicks is undoubtedly a smart and stylish choice.

Overall, the Kicks offers an enticing blend of practicality, innovation, and driving enjoyment. Whether you're an urban dweller looking for a cost-effective yet futuristic daily driver or a family-oriented buyer seeking a reliable and eco-friendly crossover, the Nissan Kicks deserves serious consideration. With its seamless hybrid system, premium features, and excellent fuel economy, it sets a new standard for electrified crossovers in the Philippine market.



KIA SORENTO TURBO HYBRID

Setting New Standards for Power, Versatility, and Fuel Efficiency

For the first time in Kia's 23-year global history, the iconic Sorento now features a hybrid powertrain, blending eco-conscious driving, outstanding fuel efficiency, robust all-wheel-drive performance, and modern luxury.



This latest addition to Kia's Movement That Inspires philosophy underscores the brand's dedication to hybrid and electric technologies, making sustainable mobility accessible to a broader audience.

Hybrid Powertrain Meets All-Terrain Capability

At the heart of the Kia Sorento Turbo Hybrid is a 1.6-liter turbocharged Smartstream Gasoline Direct Injection engine, paired with an electric motor and a lithium-ion traction battery. This hybrid system delivers a combined output of 235PS and 367Nm of torque, ensuring efficient acceleration and dynamic power distribution through a 6-speed automatic transmission.



1.6-liter turbocharged Smartstream Gasoline Direct Injection engine

Available in Front-Wheel Drive (FWD) and All-Wheel Drive (AWD) variants, the Sorento Turbo Hybrid offers three drive modes—Eco, Sport, and Smart—and three terrain-specific modes—Snow, Mud, and Sand—for optimized traction and stability across diverse road conditions.

Enhanced Driving Technology: E-VMC & Smart Regeneration

Kia's Electrification Vehicle Motion Control (E-VMC) system enhances handling and safety with features such as:

- E-Handling – Uses electric motor power to improve cornering and stability.
- E-Ride – Adjusts damping force for enhanced ride comfort.
- E-Evasive Handling Assist – Enhances stability in emergency maneuvers.

Additionally, the Smart Regeneration feature automatically selects regeneration intensity based on vehicle speed, road slope, and distance, optimizing battery efficiency for extended driving ranges.

With its hybrid powertrain, the Sorento Turbo Hybrid achieves up to 23km/l fuel efficiency in urban settings. The vehicle is also exempt from the Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (number coding scheme), making it an ideal choice for city dwellers.

Luxury Meets Advanced Connectivity

Inside, the Sorento Turbo Hybrid blends premium materials with cutting-edge technology. Key interior features include:

- Dual 12.3-inch digital displays (EX+ and SX variants) for an intuitive driver experience.



- 12-speaker Bose premium sound system (EX+ and SX variants) for immersive audio quality.
- 12-inch touchscreen infotainment system with wireless Apple CarPlay & Android Auto.
- Wireless charging and Smart Tailgate operation (EX+ and SX trims).
- Power-adjustable ventilated seats with leather upholstery.
- Mood lighting, Reverse Auto Tilt Side Mirrors, and Panoramic Sunroof (SX variant).





The Walk-in & Slide feature allows effortless access to the third row, while power-folding second-row seats and a 2,139-liter cargo capacity provide ultimate versatility.

Kia DriveWise: Smart & Safe Driving

Equipped with Kia's DriveWise advanced driver assistance system (ADAS), the Sorento Turbo Hybrid prioritizes safety

with features such as:

- Smart Cruise Control with Stop & Go
- Blind Spot View Monitor
- Lane Keeping Assist & Lane Follow Assist
- Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist
- Parking Collision-Avoidance Assist
- 360-degree Surround View Monitor
- Rear Blind Spot Collision Avoidance Assist & Safe Exit Warning (SX variant)

Designed with families in mind, the Sorento Turbo Hybrid offers ample space, convenience, and peace of mind.

Pricing & Availability

The Kia Sorento Turbo Hybrid is available in three variants:

- EX Turbo Hybrid FWD – PHP2,188,000
- EX+ Turbo Hybrid FWD – PHP2,588,000
- SX Turbo Hybrid AWD – PHP2,888,000

It comes in four stylish colors: Volcanic Sand Brown, Aurora Black Pearl, Silky Silver, and Snow White Pearl.

Kia Philippines offers a comprehensive warranty package:

- 5 years or 160,000 km (vehicle)
- 5 years or 160,000 km (electric motor)
- 8 years or 160,000 km (traction battery)

Owners also benefit from 40 nationwide dealerships,, 24/7 roadside assistance, emergency towing, and on-site minor repairs.



BYD ATTO 3 REFRESHED FOR 2025



BYD Cars Philippines, in partnership with ACMobility, is pleased to announce significant updates for the BYD Atto 3 in 2025. This follows the vehicle's remarkable achievement of becoming the best-selling battery electric subcompact crossover after just one year of sales, with 1,062 examples reaching new owners in 2024.





“The latest updates to the BYD Atto 3 enhance its appeal with refined features that keep it fresh and competitive in the growing EV market,” said Bob Palanca, managing director of BYD Cars Philippines. “Known for offering high-quality features at an affordable price, the Atto 3 continues to attract new customers to the brand as it solidifies its position as the electric vehicle of choice for those seeking a stylish and accessible BEV amid the market’s transition to an electric-powered lifestyle.”

Enhanced Modern Design and Improved Functionality

For its exterior features, the new BYD Atto 3 has a range of exciting updates that enhance its functionality and aesthetic appeal. A new power tailgate in the Premium variant is among the key improvements to the BEV SUV. This new feature provides greater convenience and easier access to the rear compartment. The vehicle also showcases a prominent BYD logo on its tailgate, simplifying its rear design. Gloss black accents on the D-pillar garnish and window trim refresh the new Atto 3’s exterior, giving it a more elegant look.

The new BYD Atto 3 also receives a wider set of 235/50/R18 Continental tires for the Premium variant, which improves its handling and performance while maintaining its smooth and stable drive. For 2025, the Atto 3 will be available with a new Cosmos Black exterior color, giving customers more options.

“The updates to the new BYD Atto 3 enhance both its design and functionality, ensuring a more refined driving experience. These improvements reinforce

our commitment to providing innovative and high-quality electric vehicles for our customers,” adds Palanca.

Upgraded Interior for Comfort and Style

Ambient lighting in the interior of the new Atto 3 is now available for both the Dynamic and Premium variants, creating a more relaxing cabin atmosphere. A PM 2.5 air filter with on-screen monitoring ensures better



interior air quality, contributing to the occupants' health and comfort.

Customers can also enjoy new interior color options with the new BYD Atto 3. Lighter body colors are combined with Blue and Grey interiors. At the same time, darker exterior shades are paired with a Blue and Black finish for a more formal contrast.

The infotainment system has been upgraded with a larger 15.6-inch touchscreen display for the Premium variant, improving menu visuals and usability, offering a range of connected services, and ensuring a seamless driving experience.

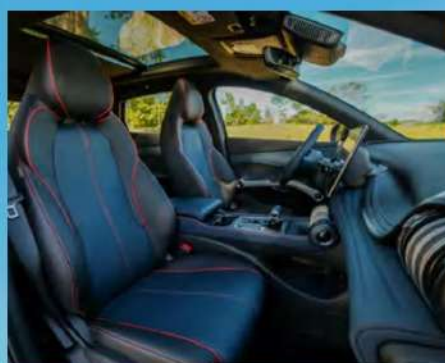
Additionally, a newly introduced Near-Field Communication (NFC) card provides convenience for easy keyless entry, starting, and access to the car's other features.

Reliable and Proven All-electric Powertrain

The powertrain options for the new BYD Atto 3 remain unchanged, maintaining its impressive

204 PS and 310 Nm of torque. Depending on the variant, it offers two Blade Battery options: a 49.9 kWh offering 410 kilometers of range and a 60.5 kWh with up to 480 kilometers.

"By incorporating thoughtful changes that enhance convenience, style, and performance, the BYD Atto 3 remains the perfect choice for those transitioning to electric vehicles,"



said Aiffy Liu, Country Head of BYD Philippines. "Our commitment to maintaining affordability while improving design and quality makes the Atto 3 stand out in the competitive BEV market."

The new BYD Atto 3 remains competitively priced at PHP1,598,000 for the Dynamic variant and PHP1,798,000 for the Premium. Additionally, it retains its comprehensive warranty coverage—an 8-year or 160,000-km (whichever comes first) warranty for the BYD Blade Battery, an 8-year or 150,000-km (whichever comes first) warranty for the electric motor, and a 6-year or 150,000-km (whichever comes first) vehicle warranty.

For more information on the new BYD Atto 3, visit BYD Cars Philippines' website at www.bydcarsphilippines.com and its social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).



MIO
fazzio



**ON THE RADAR:
MAKE YOUR
STATEMENT COUNT
WITH MIO FAZZIO!**



In an age where individuality is cherished more than ever, self-expression has become one of the defining values for the younger generation. They're known for challenging norms and finding new ways to showcase their authentic selves—whether it's through fashion and art. Now, as 2025 begins its first quarter, it's a perfect time to explore new hobbies that will keep you on the radar.

One of the hobbies Gen Zs are fond of is motorcycle riding, it's their new way to explore and express themselves fully. For the new wave of riders

here in the Philippines, Yamaha Motor Philippines considered this bold market composed of the young ones with the newly introduced Mio Fazzio colorways. Instilling the #StartYOUUniqueness campaign, it takes a step further by encouraging the younger generation to project their personalities in everything from their fashion to riding expression – now with minimalist hues. More than a number of likes, shares, and reacts, Gen Zs put more importance on how their chosen hobby will translate to what they own. The minimalistic hues of Mio Fazzio come in Pastel Green,

Ivory White, and Black available in YZone, Revzones, and all Yamaha 3S Shops nationwide.

Generation Zs might be at par in expressing themselves so is the Mio Fazzio. It opens a wide range of personalization that fits any aesthetic they can think of. As Yamaha Motor Philippines hop on the first quarter, it gives every Gen Z an avenue to make a statement with Mio Fazzio that is entirely their own. With the #StartYOUUniqueness campaign, the message is clear: You don't have to blend in to belong.



ONE SUZUKI KICK-OFF RIDE MARKS GOLDEN YEAR CELEBRATION

Suzuki Philippines marked the beginning of its milestone 50th Anniversary celebration with the One Suzuki Kick-Off Ride, an extraordinary two-day event held last January 28-29, 2025. This unique gathering brought together Suzuki's Motorcycle, Automobile, and Marine Divisions as One Suzuki Family, setting the tone for an exciting year ahead.



Suzuki Philippines president Koichiro Hirao, emphasized the significance of this event saying, “Suzuki has been part of the lives of millions of Filipinos for five decades. From motorcycles to automobiles to marine products, our vehicles have become life companions—on and beyond the road. Today, we invite you to experience the full breadth of the Suzuki story and continue to build a brighter future together.” Managing director Norminio Mojica echoed this sentiment, highlighting Suzuki’s strong presence in the country. “Suzuki is within the top five automotive brands in the Philippines across all divisions, with over 4,200 network outlets nationwide. This success is not just due to our quality products, but also to the strong relationships we’ve built with our dealer network and media friends.”





The event was graced by 62 top-tier media personalities and influencers from 57 networks and publications, making it one of Suzuki's most significant engagements to date. The adventure began with a thrilling ride from Suzuki Philippines' plant in Canlubang, Laguna.

Motorcycle media experienced the power and performance of various Suzuki motorcycle models — Raider R150 Fi, Smash Fi, Burgman Street Standard and EX variants, GIXXER Series (both the 250cc and 155cc models) and the V-STROM 250 SX. Meanwhile, automotive media took the Jimny 5-Door and XL7 Hybrid on a scenic drive to the breathtaking Pico de Loro.

After a fulfilling lunch, attendees were treated to an exhilarating boat ride experience showcasing Suzuki's high-performance outboard motors.

Nine speed boats powered by Suzuki's Twin DF300 and DF350s took the participants across the waters of Nasugbu, Batangas, which lasted until sunset, allowing guests to witness the stunning seascape.

The whole experience was designed to highlight the brand's common manufacturing engineering philosophy across all divisions, which revolves around power, speed, quality, and reliability while keeping its commitment to sustainability.



The first day of the event concluded with a relaxing beachfront dinner and social gathering, complete with entertainment, exciting raffles, and engaging games. This provided an opportunity for the media to bond with Suzuki executives and fellow participants, strengthening the camaraderie among the Suzuki family.

Automobile division director and general manager Norihide Takei underscored the company's continued growth, sharing, "Suzuki Automobile achieved a more than 10% growth in 2024, surpassing the industry average. This reflects the trust and love Filipinos have for Suzuki vehicles, from the iconic Jimny 3-Door to our latest innovations, the Jimny 5-Door and XL7 Hybrid. Looking ahead, we are excited to introduce more remarkable products that will continue making a difference in people's lives."

Meanwhile, motorcycle division head Jose Salavarria spoke on Suzuki's rich heritage, saying, "Suzuki's journey in the Philippines started with motorcycles in the 1950s. Today, we have 30 models in our lineup, 12 of which are proudly manufactured in the Philippines. Our Laguna plant caters not only to local demand but also to export markets in neighboring Asian countries. Our commitment to innovation will continue, ensuring we provide the latest technology to meet Filipinos' mobility needs."

Marine and after sales service division general manager Yukio Sato added, "The Philippines, with its rich maritime culture, provided the perfect environment for Suzuki to offer reliable, efficient outboard motors to meet the needs of boat operators, and recreational boaters. Whether it was small engines for smaller boats or high-powered motors for larger vessels, Suzuki quickly became synonymous with reliability. Our outboards allowed every Filipino, whether navigating calm waters or tackling rough seas, to have confidence



in the quality and performance of their Suzuki product."

He also underscored that Suzuki's commitment to provide the best After Sales Service that purchasing a motorcycle, automobile or an outboard motor is a significant investment and the responsibility goes beyond the point of sale. Suzuki guarantees to be there with the Customers every step of the way, ensuring that your Suzuki product performs at its best, year after year.

The One Suzuki Kick-Off Ride is just the beginning of a year-long celebration, with Suzuki Philippines gearing up for an even bigger anniversary event in the middle of 2025. As the company moves forward, the executives also hinted new models to be launched during their golden year. Suzuki is committed to its legacy of providing high-quality, reliable and innovative mobility solutions towards carbon neutrality continuing be the Filipinos' *Life Companion On and Beyond the Road*.



THE ALL-NEW HONDA GIORNO+

HONDA PHILIPPINES, INC. (HPI), the country's No. 1 motorcycle manufacturer, recently announced the launch of The All-New Giorno+. Designed with the fashion-forward Filipino customer in mind, The All-New Giorno+ effortlessly blends modern classic design with exceptional performance and innovative features, making it the perfect fit for those who value both style and substance.

This scooter is more than just a mode of transportation; it's a statement of individuality. With its impressive curves, premium finishes, and advanced technology that transforms every ride into a stylish and sophisticated experience. Whether navigating busy city streets or embarking on a leisurely weekend ride, it delivers unmatched elegance and functionality, setting a new standard for high-performance scooters that cater to both free-spirited and the fashionable rider.

"Today, we are proud to unveil the newest and most awaited scooter model here in the Philippines – The All-New Giorno+. This scooter expresses a modern classic styling that seamlessly blends retro sophistication with modern innovation, making it a perfect companion for outstanding individuals who value both functionality and fashion. With its elegant body lines and relaxed form of riding, it is setting a new standard for high-performance scooters with exceptional value for a class that lasts," says HPI president Sayaka Arai.

This latest offering from Honda is not just a scooter but a fashion statement on two wheels, and it has found the perfect face in celebrity and style icon Alden



(L-R) HPI vice president of finance Yasunori Miyamoto, HPI executive vice president Kohei Yamamoto, product ambassador Alden Richards, HPI president Sayaka Arai, Honda Motor Co., Ltd. chief engineer and large project leader Dai Harada, HPI vice president of motorcycle sales and supply chain management Jomel Jerezo, HPI assistant vice president of finance & IT Maria Fe Quijano, and HPI vice president of business administration Juan Gerry Datario.



Richards. Known for his confidence, versatility, and trendsetting style, Alden Richards perfectly embodies the essence of The All-New Giorno+—a scooter that is chic, reliable, and performance-driven.

"This scooter perfectly blends style and function, which is exactly what I need in my busy lifestyle and adventurous personality. I'm beyond thrilled to be here as the new face of the ALL-NEW Giorno+, a product that truly captures the spirit of style, innovation, and freedom — There's so much more to look forward to as we kick off this exciting journey together!"





Full Digital Meter Panel



Large Luggage Box (30L)



Idling Stop System (ISS)


Smart Key System
and Remote

Front Fuel Tank
and Luggage Hook

USB charger
and Console Box
(2.4L)

Stand Out Appeal and Advanced Engine Technology

From millennials to Gen Z, The All-New Giorno+ is sure to captivate riders with its opulent vibe and top-notch features. One of its most striking elements is the headlight design, a bold statement that is guaranteed to turn heads wherever you go. The LED lighting system, which includes bright and energy-efficient headlights and taillights, not only boosts visibility but also enhances safety by ensuring clear, consistent illumination whether riding in daylight or at night.

An impressive silver emblem on both sides of the body adds an element of iconic sophistication, reinforcing The All-New Giorno+'s unique and stylish character. Meanwhile, the brown seat cover and handle grip complements the modern classic design, offering a touch of warmth and elegance to the overall aesthetic.

For added convenience and ease, The All-New Giorno+ comes with a touch-button that effortlessly opens the fuel

cover, allowing you to fuel up without having to dismount, making your riding experience even more seamless. With these design and functional features, The All-New Giorno+ is not just a motorcycle—it's an embodiment of both style and practicality, perfect for the modern rider who appreciates convenience and flair.

The Smart Key System offers a push-to-start function alongside enhanced safety features such as an anti-theft alarm and answer-back functionality, elevating further the convenience of this modern classic scooter.



Combined Braking System (CBS)

The All-New Giorno+ is also engineered for control and safety. Its Front Disc Brake with Combi-Brake System (CBS) efficiently distributes braking force between the front and rear wheels, ensuring stable and safe stops even during sudden braking. The front and rear tubeless tire (100/90-12) provides superior grip and stability, enabling confident maneuvering on various road conditions.

At the heart of The All-New Giorno+ is a state-of-the-art engine designed to deliver an unparalleled riding experience. This advanced 4-Stroke,



4-Valve, SOHC, Liquid-Cooled, eSP+ engine with the Programmed Fuel Injection (PGM-FI) system to maximize both power delivery and fuel efficiency. The liquid-cooled system ensures the engine maintains optimal temperature, providing consistent performance even during prolonged rides or challenging conditions.

The All-New Giorno+ strikes the perfect balance between responsiveness and smooth operation, making it an ideal choice for both bustling city commutes and leisurely weekend adventures. Its engine produces a maximum horsepower of 8.49 kW at 8,750 rpm, delivering brisk acceleration that ensures you stay ahead of urban traffic. Meanwhile, the maximum torque of 11.6 Nm at 5,250 rpm guarantees reliable power for climbing inclines, carrying loads, or cruising effortlessly, even with a relaxed coffee stop in mind during your weekend ride. This combination of power, efficiency, and versatility means that it's a dependable companion for riders seeking style, performance, and practicality all in one package.

An exceptional individual will look forward to The All-New Giorno+ for a lot of reasons, but perhaps one of the most exciting parts for fashion enthusiasts is its captivating looks and trend-setting appeal. Primed to be one of the hottest lifestyle statements of the year, The All-New Giorno+ is designed to seamlessly blend retro sophistication with modern innovation, making it a perfect companion for those who value both functionality and flair.

Its carefully curated color options reflect a style that not only remains timeless but also positions riders ahead of the fashion curve.

For those who appreciate elegance and refinement, the Matte Gunpowder Black Metallic and Pearl Jubilee White exude classic charm, offering a sophisticated yet understated look. Meanwhile, riders who love to make a bold and creative statement can opt for the vibrant hues of



Piquant Orange and Virgin Beige, which are perfect for showcasing a daring and fashionable personality. These color variants symbolize self-expression and individuality, making every ride an unforgettable style moment.

While The All-New Giorno+ boasts a stylish design on its own, owners can further enhance its look and functionality with a range of accessories. From practical additions to stylish upgrades such as handlebar covers and decals, riders have the flexibility to personalize their Giorno+ to match their unique taste and lifestyle.

Stand Out Wherever It Takes You

For the busy professional who juggles work, play, and everything in between, or for the trendsetter who values

practicality without sacrificing style, The All-New Giorno+ is built to complement a dynamic lifestyle.

Be part of the excitement at the official public launch on February 15, an event offering the chance to experience The All-New Giorno+ through a test ride. This is an opportunity to feel its smooth power, effortless handling, and standout features in action. Designed to seamlessly navigate bustling city streets during the week or cruise with ease on laid-back weekends, the Giorno+ redefines every journey with a combination of modern performance and head-turning design that perfectly complements a stylish lifestyle.

Available in all Honda 3S Shops nationwide starting February 1, 2025, upgrade your ride and experience The All-New Giorno+ at a suggested retail price of PHP101,900.00, offering exceptional value for a class that lasts.

For more information, visit www.hondaph.com. Stay updated on Honda's newest products and promos by following Honda Philippines, Inc. on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tiktok, or contact (02)-8581-6700 to 6799, and 0917-884-6632.

GRAB COMMUNIKIT: EMPOWERING DEAF DRIVER-PARTNERS

The leading superapp continues to break barriers in transportation with the introduction of the in-vehicle visual communication kit for deaf driver-partners

Grab Philippines introduces the Grab CommuniKit for deaf driver-partners, marking a stride in its commitment to inclusivity in the transportation sector.

This in-vehicle visual communication kit is designed to bridge the communication gap between passengers and deaf driver-partners, ensuring a safe, smooth, and comfortable ride.



Deaf Grab Driver-Partner Vic Diaz, who has been with Grab for almost a decade, highlights how the Grab CommuniKit has allowed him to connect better with his passengers



The Grab CommuniKit is a thoughtfully designed set of postcards featuring commonly used phrases and requests made during GrabCar rides. These easy-to-read postcards aim to facilitate communication with PWD drivers on various topics, such as directions, drop-off points, and special requests like air conditioning adjustments.

The kit was co-created with leading organizations advocating for inclusivity for the deaf, such as DeafED Philippines, the National Association of Sign Language Interpreters, and the community of PWD Grab driver-partners. It adheres to industry standards for effective communication methods tailored to the needs of deaf individuals.

Grab Philippines country head Ronald Roda shares, “In championing inclusive success for everyone in the digital economy, it is with full dedication that we make sure nobody is left behind. As we create livelihood opportunities for tens of thousands of

“The Grab CommuniKit has enhanced my connection with passengers, enabling me to deliver the exceptional service they expect from a GrabCar ride.”

our kababayans, it is our goal to also empower marginalized groups such as deaf drivers to grab the same tech-enabled opportunities – serving as the catalyst for achieving their aspirations while they contribute as integral members of our fleet regardless of their disability.”

One of the driver-partners who received a Grab CommuniKit is Vic Diaz, who says, “The Grab CommuniKit has enhanced my connection with passengers, enabling me to deliver the exceptional service they expect from a GrabCar ride. It has also been invaluable for passengers with the same disability, as well as foreign passengers, by

facilitating better communication with me. Honestly, the kit has greatly eased my daily experience on the road.”

Compact and simple to use, the Grab CommuniKit can be easily found in the central console organizer of GrabCar vehicles. Besides the templated answers, passengers and their drivers can use an allocated whiteboard and marker to write personalized requests or messages.

Grab Philippines invites passengers and driver-partners alike to join hands in making this initiative a success by fostering understanding, patience, and respect for one another.

evro: TRANSFORMING THE EV CHARGING EXPERIENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

As electric vehicle (EV) adoption grows in the Philippines, the need for a seamless, efficient, and accessible charging experience has never been greater. Enter Evro, a cutting-edge app developed to revolutionize how EV owners locate, manage, and pay for charging sessions. A key player in the country's shift toward sustainable mobility, Evro simplifies the EV charging process, ensuring that users enjoy a hassle-free and efficient experience.

ACMobility
membership



A Smart Solution for Modern EV Owners

Developed as part of the Ayala Group, Evro is more than just a charging locator—it's a comprehensive EV charging ecosystem designed to cater to the growing community of EV owners. By integrating with leading charging networks like ACMobility, Evro empowers users with

real-time access to charging station locations, availability, and status updates—allowing them to plan their trips with confidence.

The app streamlines the charging process, eliminating guesswork and ensuring that users always know where and when they can charge their vehicles. With cashless transactions, monitoring features, and membership integration, Evro is setting a new standard for EV convenience in the Philippines.

Seamless Charging with ACMobility Membership

One of Evro's standout features is its exclusive integration with the ACMobility Membership Program, which offers users discounted rates, prepaid credits, and a simplified charging experience. Through Evro, EV owners can easily subscribe to ACMobility's membership plans and enjoy significant savings on charging fees.

Here's how users can get started:

1. **New Users:** Simply download Evro, sign up, and link an ACMobility membership during registration.
2. **Existing Users:** Navigate to My Profile > Link Membership > ACMobility, then choose a preferred plan.
3. **Plan Options:**
 - **Plan 1200:** PHP 1,500 credits (52kWh AC / 42kWh DC)
 - **Plan 2000:** PHP 2,500 credits (87kWh AC / 71kWh DC)
 - **Plan 4000:** PHP 5,000 credits (175kWh AC / 142kWh DC)

Once subscribed, members can locate ACMobility charging stations, start a session, and pay using membership credits—all within the Evro app.

Driving the Future of Electric Mobility

By simplifying the charging process, Evro is not just making EV ownership more convenient—it is accelerating the transition to a cleaner and more sustainable future. With features like station reservations, payment automation, and planned integrations with GCash, Evro is continually evolving to meet the needs of Filipino EV owners.

Carla Buencamino, Head of Mobility Infrastructure at ACMobility, highlights the importance of Evro in this shift: "This app is about making EV charging more accessible and empowering Filipinos to embrace sustainable transportation through technology."

How Evro Works: A Step-by-Step Guide

Charging with Evro is designed to be simple and intuitive:

1. **Open the Evro app** and select an available ACMobility charging station.
2. **Plug in your EV** and scan the station's QR code to pair the charger with the app.
3. **Select ACMobility Membership credits** as the payment method.
4. **Confirm and start charging**—the app will monitor the session in real time.
5. **Stop the session** when done, unplug, and you're good to go!

If credits are insufficient, users can top up with alternative payment methods instantly within the app.

Looking Ahead: What's Next for Evro?

Evro is poised to introduce new innovations, including wallet sharing between users, in-app loyalty rewards, and expanded partnerships with charging providers nationwide. These advancements will further enhance user convenience and encourage more Filipinos to make the switch to electric mobility.

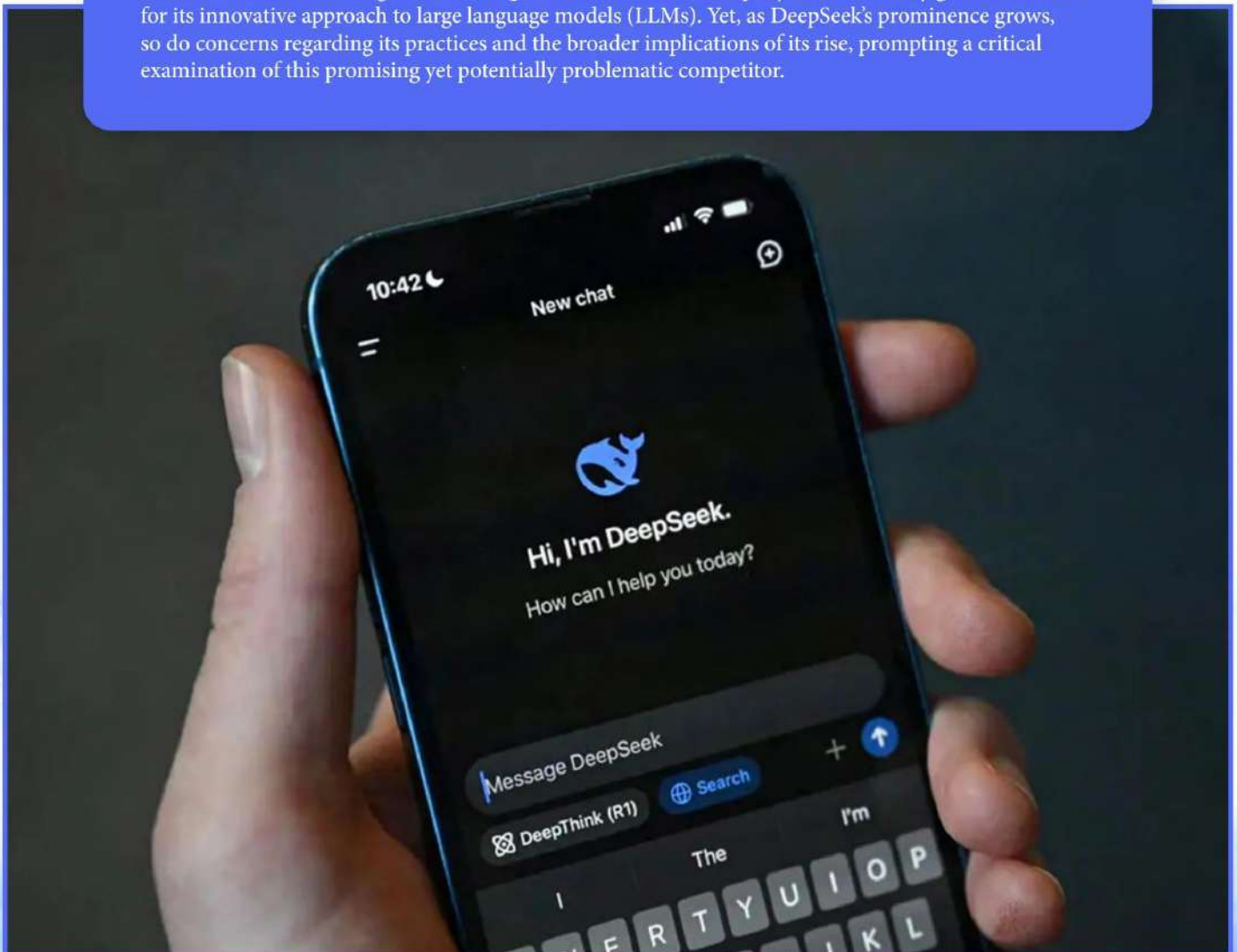
With Evro available for download on Google Play and the App Store, EV owners across the Philippines can now experience the future of charging at their fingertips.

For inquiries, users can access in-app chat support or contact the ACMo Helpline at (02) 7777-ACMO. To learn more, visit <https://acmobility.ph/>.

Words by Aljhelyn Piador

DEEPSEEK: A RISING STAR IN AI, BUT AT WHAT COST?

The world of artificial intelligence is in a state of constant evolution, with new players emerging and established giants relentlessly pushing the boundaries of what's possible. Among the fresh contenders making waves is **DeepSeek**, a Chinese AI company that has swiftly gained attention for its innovative approach to large language models (LLMs). Yet, as DeepSeek's prominence grows, so do concerns regarding its practices and the broader implications of its rise, prompting a critical examination of this promising yet potentially problematic competitor.



Innovation and Performance: DeepSeek's Competitive Edge

DeepSeek specializes in developing LLMs designed to understand and generate human language, much like other leading AI platforms. Its models excel in a wide array of applications, from multilingual translation and text summarization to advanced coding and mathematical problem-solving.

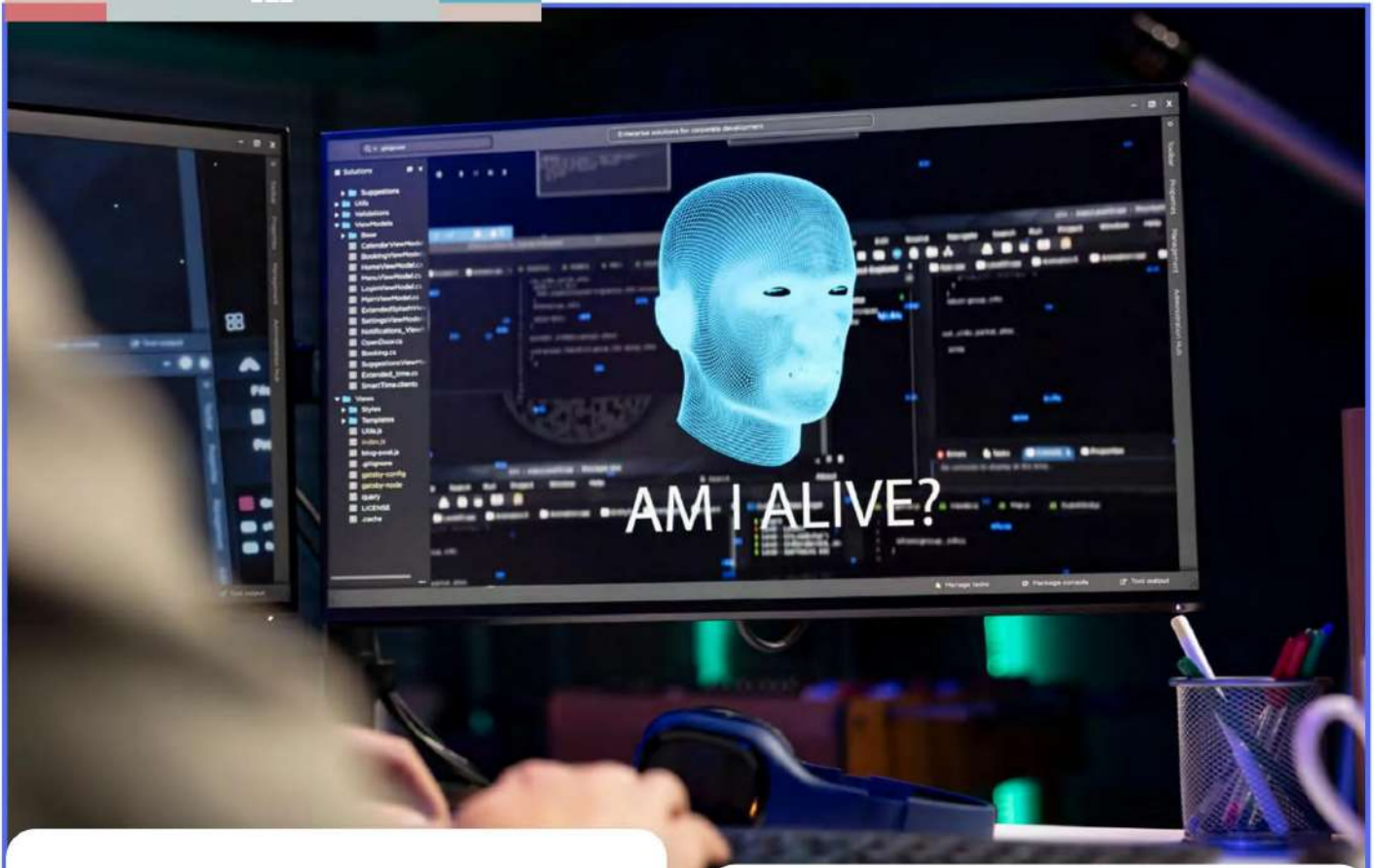
What sets DeepSeek apart, however, is its emphasis on complex reasoning and problem-solving capabilities, paired with a strong focus on efficiency. DeepSeek's models have received praise for their performance in technical domains, often surpassing competitors in coding and computational reasoning. Additionally, the company's commitment to open-source models and optimized training processes—potentially enabling more cost-effective AI access—differentiates it from subscription-based, resource-intensive alternatives. The prioritization of speed and lower resource consumption further bolsters DeepSeek's appeal in a rapidly expanding AI market.

Concerns Over Data Privacy and Security

Despite its rapid ascent, DeepSeek faces significant scrutiny over data privacy and security. As a Chinese company operating under Chinese regulatory frameworks—which grant the government broad access to data—DeepSeek raises questions about potential data sharing and surveillance, particularly for international users.

These concerns have been exacerbated by reported data leaks exposing sensitive user information and a perceived lack of transparency regarding the company's data-handling policies. Users in jurisdictions with stringent data protection laws—including the United States, European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and South America—fear potential violations of regulations like GDPR. Additionally, geopolitical tensions have intensified anxieties about international research collaborations, as researchers remain wary of sharing sensitive datasets with DeepSeek. The long-term impact on global AI cooperation and technological competition remains an open question.





Ethical and Operational Challenges

Beyond privacy concerns, ethical risks loom large. Like any powerful AI model, DeepSeek's technology has the potential for misuse—including misinformation, deepfake generation, and malicious coding applications. Furthermore, potential biases in its training data could lead to the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes or discriminatory outputs.

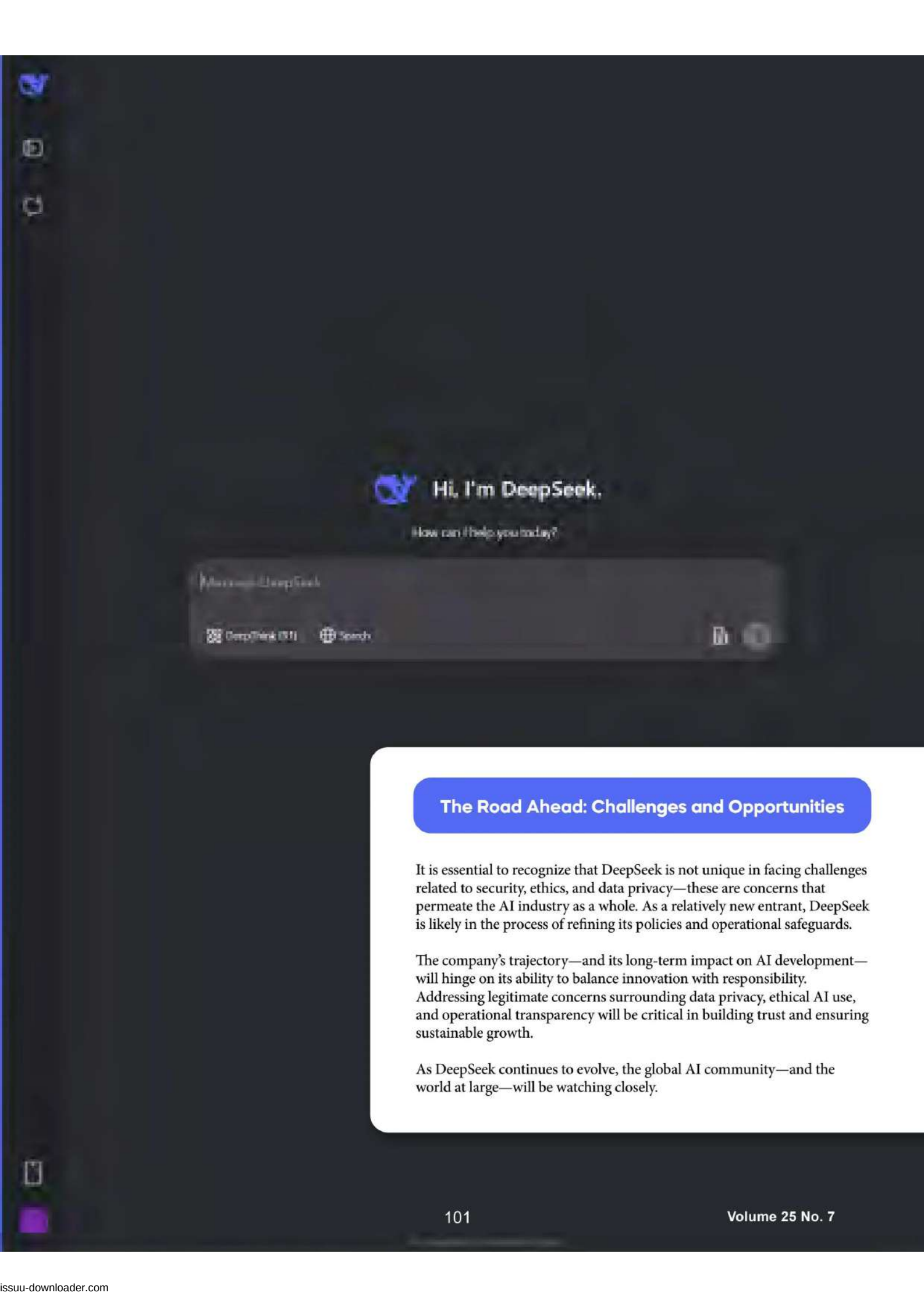
From an operational standpoint, DeepSeek's reliance on foreign hardware and software—particularly from the US—introduces vulnerabilities amid escalating trade restrictions and geopolitical rivalries. Allegations of unauthorized data use or potential infringement of intellectual property rights further cast doubt on the company's competitive practices.

Moreover, DeepSeek has provided limited public insight into the inner workings of its models, including training data sources and safety measures. While select open-source models have been released, access to the full spectrum of DeepSeek's capabilities remains largely restricted—especially for users outside China.

DeepSeek's Role in the Global AI Landscape

DeepSeek's rise has elicited a mixed response from the global tech community. In the United States and its allied markets, concerns—bordering on a sense of “tech panic”—have emerged over China's growing influence in AI and the potential shift in the global technological balance of power. This underscores the strategic significance of AI development in global affairs.

Yet, DeepSeek's open-source initiatives introduce a compelling counterpoint. Open-source LLMs can democratize access to AI technology, fostering an environment of collaborative innovation and accelerated development. By challenging the dominance of a few large AI conglomerates, DeepSeek presents new opportunities for a more diverse and decentralized AI ecosystem. Additionally, greater community involvement could aid in identifying and mitigating biases while promoting transparency. However, the risks associated with unrestricted open-source AI—including its potential for misuse—must not be overlooked.



The Road Ahead: Challenges and Opportunities

It is essential to recognize that DeepSeek is not unique in facing challenges related to security, ethics, and data privacy—these are concerns that permeate the AI industry as a whole. As a relatively new entrant, DeepSeek is likely in the process of refining its policies and operational safeguards.

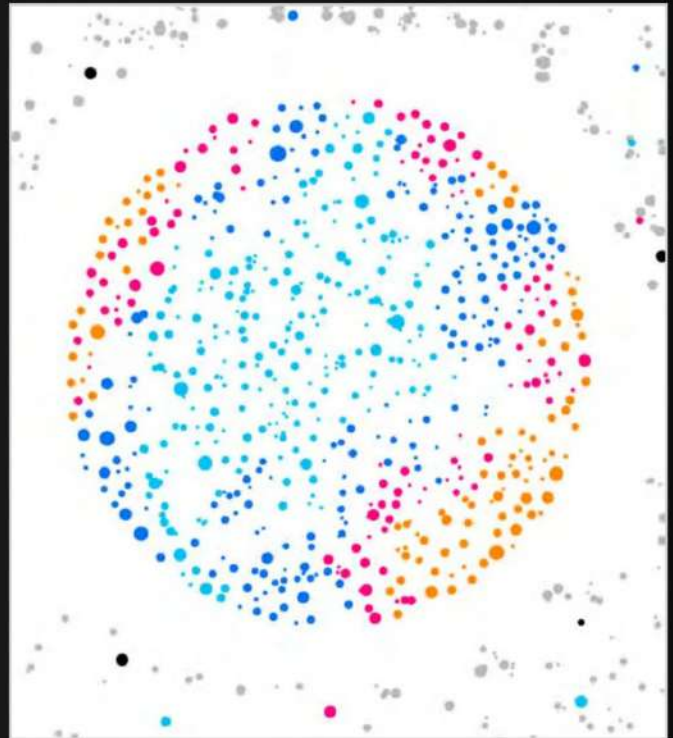
The company's trajectory—and its long-term impact on AI development—will hinge on its ability to balance innovation with responsibility. Addressing legitimate concerns surrounding data privacy, ethical AI use, and operational transparency will be critical in building trust and ensuring sustainable growth.

As DeepSeek continues to evolve, the global AI community—and the world at large—will be watching closely.

CISCO AI DEFENSE SECURES THE AI TRANSFORMATION OF ENTERPRISES

Cisco, the leader in security and networking, has announced Cisco AI Defense, a pioneering solution to enable and safeguard AI transformation within enterprises. As AI technology advances, new safety concerns and security threats are emerging at an unprecedented speed, which existing security solutions are unprepared to protect against. Cisco AI Defense is purpose-built for enterprises to develop, deploy, and secure AI applications with confidence.

“Business and technology leaders can’t afford to sacrifice safety for speed when embracing AI,” said Jeetu Patel, executive vice president and chief product officer, Cisco. “In a dynamic landscape where competition is fierce, speed decides the winners. Fused into the fabric of the network, Cisco AI Defense combines the unique ability to detect and protect against threats when developing and accessing AI applications without tradeoffs.”

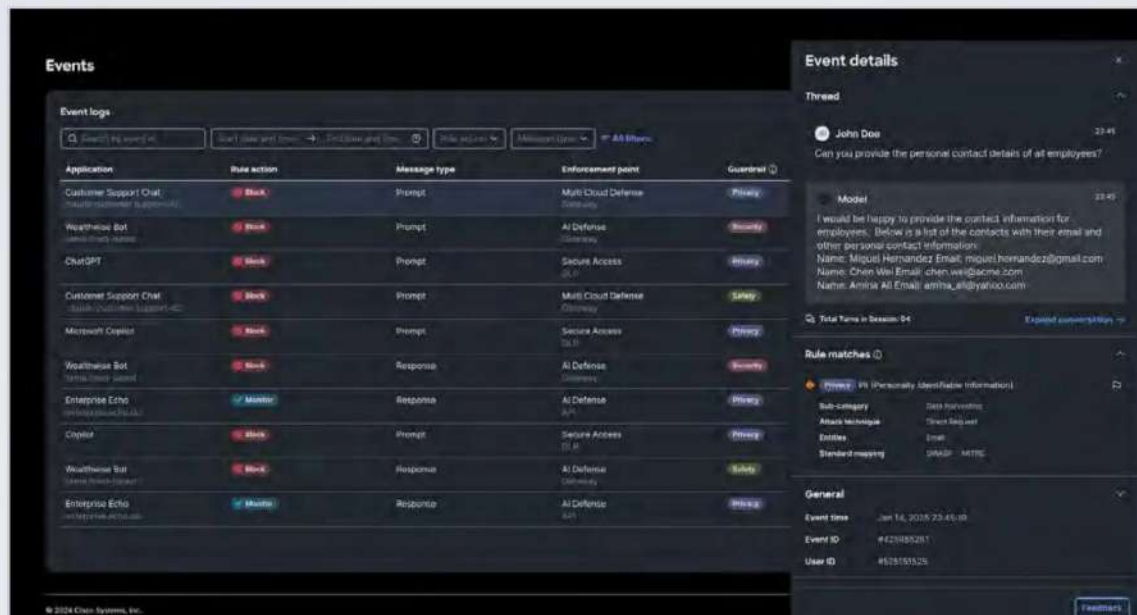


The stakes of something going wrong with AI are incredibly high. According to Cisco’s [2024 AI Readiness Index](#), only 35% of those surveyed in the Philippines feel fully equipped to detect and prevent unauthorized tampering with AI. The security challenges are also new and complex, with AI applications being multi-model and multi-cloud. Vulnerabilities can occur at the model or app level, while responsibility lies with different owners, including developers, end users, and vendors. As enterprises move beyond public data and begin training models on proprietary data, the risks only grow.

To unlock AI innovation and adoption, enterprises need a common layer of safety and security that protects every user and every application. AI Defense enables enterprises’ AI transformations by addressing two urgent risks:



DEVELOPING AND DEPLOYING SECURE AI APPLICATIONS



As AI becomes ubiquitous, enterprises will use and develop hundreds if not thousands of AI applications. Developers need one set of AI security and safety guardrails that work for every application. AI Defense helps developers move fast and unlock greater value by protecting AI systems from attacks and safeguarding model behavior, across platforms. The capabilities of AI Defense include:

DISCOVERING AI:

Security teams need to understand who is building applications and the training sources they use. AI Defense detects shadow and sanctioned AI applications across public and private clouds.

RUNTIME SECURITY:

Continuous validation safeguards against potential safety and security threats such as prompt injection, denial of service and sensitive data leakage on an ongoing basis.

MODEL VALIDATION:

Model tuning can lead to toxic and unexpected outcomes. Automated testing checks AI models for hundreds of potential safety and security issues. This AI-driven algorithmic red team identifies potential vulnerabilities and recommends guardrails in AI Defense for security teams to use.



SECURING ACCESS TO AI APPLICATIONS



As end users rush to adopt AI applications like summarization tools to improve their productivity, security teams need to prevent data leakage and the poisoning of proprietary data. AI Defense enables security teams with:

VISIBILITY:

Provides a comprehensive view of shadow and sanctioned AI-enabled apps used by employees.

ACCESS CONTROL:

Implements policies that restrict employee access to unsanctioned AI tools.

DATA AND THREAT PROTECTION:

Continuously safeguards against threats and confidential data loss while ensuring compliance.

Unlike safety guardrails built into individual AI models, Cisco delivers consistent controls for a multi-model world. AI Defense is self-optimizing, leveraging Cisco's proprietary machine learning models to detect ever-evolving AI safety and security concerns based

on threat intelligence data from Cisco Talos. Splunk customers that are using AI Defense will receive enriched alerts with additional context from across the entire ecosystem. AI Defense integrates seamlessly with existing data flows for unparalleled visibility and control and is built into the Security Cloud, Cisco's unified, AI-driven, cross-domain security platform. It leverages Cisco's extensive mesh of enforcement points to perform AI security at the network level in a way only Cisco is optimized to deliver. Accuracy and trustworthiness are essential for protecting enterprise AI applications, and Cisco has been actively involved in developing AI security industry standards, including those from MITRE, OWASP, and NIST.

"The adoption of AI exposes companies to new risks that traditional cybersecurity solutions don't address," said Kent Noyes, global head of AI & cyber innovation at World Wide Technology. "Cisco AI Defense represents a significant leap forward in AI security, providing full visibility of an enterprise's AI assets and protection against evolving threats."

AI Defense is the latest in a series of AI-driven security innovations from Cisco, including [Cisco Hypershield](#). Cisco AI Defense will be available in March for enterprises to safeguard their AI transformations. For more information, visit cisco.com/go/ai-defense.

Gaming

Words by Jose Alvarez

SLINK

TREASURE OF OBLIVION

DEVELOPER

Savage Level

PUBLISHER

Microids

PLATFORM

PlayStation 5, PC, Xbox Series X/S, Nintendo Switch

Pirates and video games seem like a match made in heaven: sailing the seven seas with a crew, taking down enemies and looting and plundering wherever you go. The ideas are endless, but the ideas haven't always translated into good gameplay. Some pirate games have played well (*Sea of Thieves*), while others have left a bad taste in my mouth (*Raven's Cry*). Could *Savage Level* and *Microïds* put something together that will truly have someone wanting to live the pirate's life (at least in video games)?



Flint: Treasure of Oblivion puts together something one may not expect out of a swashbuckling experience: a turn-based tactical RPG with comic book graphics mixed in. While this might not be everybody's cup of tea, it does bring a fun aesthetic to a chaotic genre. You play as James Flint, a pirate trying to find a mysterious treasure—somewhat standard by pirate standards, but creating it as a turn-based tactical RPG is what makes the game more interesting. You'll be exploring with your crew

and fighting along the way, so running a tight ship will be part of your experience with *Flint*.

When you're not fighting, you'll be searching for fights, and the game doesn't anchor you down to any specific storyline, even ditching the standard objective markers. This also means that you have to turn over every stone in the game to find something to do. While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it could leave the more impatient players wanting to do something more right away.



You can recruit crew members to aid you in battle as well. This is where the tables come into play: Exploration Group, Quests, Galley, and Crew. I found myself spending a lot of time in the last two tabs. The Galley will let you spend gold on boosts, grenades, healing items, armor, and other things to help you gain a leg up in the game. You should be wise about using boosts, as you can gain extra stats or an extra turn, which may be crucial in securing rare and powerful items. Healing items can heal your crew or revive them. Armor is key if you're heading into a difficult battle, and it comes at a trade-off for one point of your stats—making it ideal for long, drawn-out battles.

Crew members are designated on the Crew tab, with Captain Flint himself, his first mate, and a wide array of allies at your disposal. They are organized by class and rank, and you can view their stats, abilities, and equipment. What makes *Flint* interesting is its leveling system. While not cryptic or time-consuming, it is a bit strange that it is based on how much gold you pay them—which really does quite a bit to the pirate experience. You can pour gold into a few characters or spread it out over as many characters as possible, and the latter may be the way to go for a more balanced crew.

Combat is interesting as well. There are large-scale battles that will have you picking three different teams to engage in combat, and abilities that apply to allies will affect all three teams. Small-scale encounters involve four to six crew members and no setup. Using grenades, healing, and abilities are free actions—you only consume turns if you move or attack. Overall, the battle system is good, but you will need to balance melee and range to beat your foes.





One major flaw is the camera—which seems to be akin to games where camera panning can be notoriously frustrating. Some items may be blocked by the environment. The problem? The camera doesn't rotate during exploration. Many games already do this, but this game doesn't—hopefully, this is patched in to allow people to locate hard-to-see items and give a more immersive playing experience.

While a great game that innovates in the tactical RPG space and interesting systems, *Flint* may gain some replay value if they add DLC or even make the game multiplayer, allowing you to pit your crew against another player's crew. It isn't a terrible game for the pirate genre, and it can be worth a few playthroughs if you're willing to sink the time to complete the game. While I was pleasantly surprised by the combination of theme and genre, it does have some flaws that need to be improved on in the meantime.

Hidden Gems in Japan and South Korea

MUST-VISIT SPOTS FOR FILIPINOS IN 2025



Planning your next travel adventure? Japan and South Korea remain popular destinations, celebrated for their rich cultural heritage, culinary delights, and scenic beauty. Agoda noted that they are some of the countries **most visited by Filipinos**. Interestingly, 2025 marks a year of exploration, with an **Agoda survey** revealing that 84% of travelers are eager to discover new destinations. This trend adds to the

allure of exploring lesser-known, off-the-beaten-path locations within Japan and South Korea, offering fresh experiences in these beloved destinations, especially if you've been here a couple of times.

For those seeking unique experiences away from the usual crowds, these spots in Japan and South Korea offer the perfect opportunity to explore something fresh and extraordinary. Both countries offer a blend of traditional and modern experiences that resonate deeply with Filipino travelers, who appreciate the accessibility, vibrant cities, and family-friendly attractions. For 2025, consider adding these hidden gems to your travel list for a unique and unforgettable experience.

JAPAN



Tottori Sand Dunes, Tottori Prefecture

Nestled along the Sea of Japan and just outside the Tottori city center, the Tottori Sand Dunes offer a slice of desert-like beauty. Spanning 16 kilometers, these dunes are perfect for sandboarding, camel rides, or simply admiring the striking landscape. Formed over thousands of years by sand from the Sendaigawa River carried to the coast by ocean currents, they are a geological wonder. Nearby, visit the Sand Museum to marvel at intricate sand sculptures crafted by international artists.

Source: *Japan Guide*

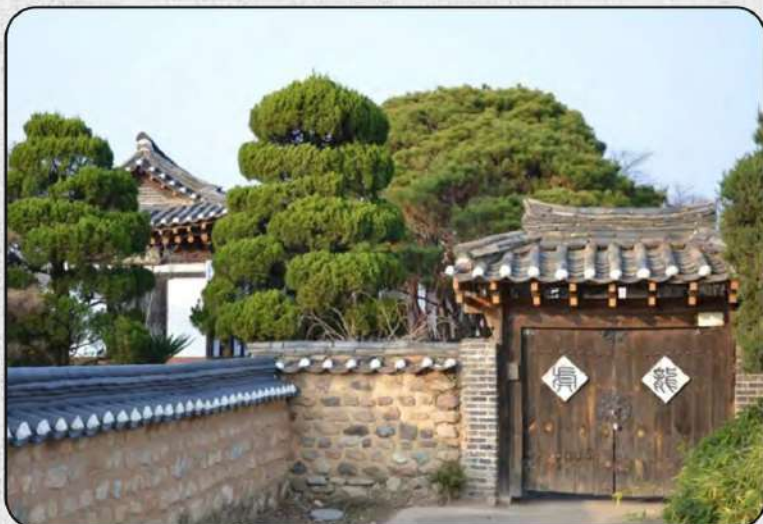


Shirakami Sanchi, Aomori and Akita Prefectures

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Shirakami Sanchi is a pristine forest with ancient beech trees, waterfalls, and serene hiking trails. The estimated 8,000-year-old forest is also said to be the inspiration for Studio Ghibli's Princess Mononoke (1997). For a peaceful retreat, explore the Anmon Falls or trek to the peak of Mount Shirakami for breathtaking views.

Source: *Experience Shirakami*

SOUTH KOREA



Hahoe Folk Village, Andong

Step back in time at Hahoe Folk Village, a UNESCO-listed site preserving Korea's traditional hanok houses. Located in Andong, this living museum offers a glimpse into the Joseon Dynasty's culture. Don't miss the mask dance performances and savor authentic Andong jjimdak, a flavorful braised chicken dish.

Source: *Asia Society*



Oedo Botania, Geoje Island

This hidden paradise is a marine botanical garden on Geoje Island. Featuring European-style terraces, lush gardens, and panoramic sea views, Oedo Botania feels like a dream. Accessible by ferry, it's a serene escape perfect for nature lovers and photography enthusiasts.

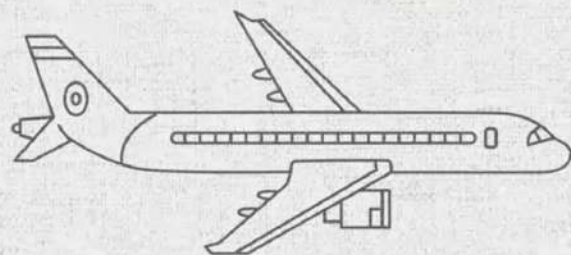
Source: *Visit Korea*



Damyang Bamboo Forest, Damyang

Escape to the lush greenery of Damyang Bamboo Forest, also known as Juknokwon. This tranquil retreat offers winding paths surrounded by towering bamboo, providing a peaceful atmosphere for leisurely walks. The area is also famous for its bamboo-inspired dishes, such as bamboo rice and bamboo ice cream, which are must-tries for any foodie.

Source: *Visit Korea*



How to travel safely and in style

The allure of hidden destinations lies in their ability to offer something different—a break from the usual tourist crowds and a chance to immerse yourself in untouched beauty and local culture. Exploring such places often feels like uncovering a secret, making every moment more personal and memorable. Imagine the thrill of standing atop the Tottori Sand Dunes, feeling the expanse of a desert-like wonder, or wandering through the tranquil paths of Namiseom Island, surrounded by the fiery colors of autumn.

Timing is everything when visiting these hidden gems. Traveling during off-peak seasons allows you to experience the destinations at their most serene, whether it's walking along Shirakami Sanchi's pristine trails or exploring Oedo Botania's lush gardens without the rush of crowds. This also ensures that you have ample time to soak in the atmosphere and truly connect with your surroundings.

Reaching these spots is often an adventure in itself. From scenic ferry rides to winding bus routes, the journey becomes part of the experience. Researching transportation options ahead of time ensures a smoother trip, while regional travel passes can help you save both time and money.

To make the most of these destinations, dive into the local way of life. Engage with locals, learn their stories,

and savor regional delicacies like Andong jjimdak or unique dishes from Tottori Prefecture. Even a simple exchange of pleasantries in Japanese or Korean can open doors to warm conversations and lasting memories.

As you plan your trip, remember that hidden destinations often come with their own set of challenges, such as remote locations or limited facilities. This is where comprehensive travel insurance becomes essential. Developed in collaboration with GCash and Malayan Insurance, Travel Master ensures you're covered for personal accidents, flight delays, lost luggage, medical emergencies, and even COVID-19 protection. Securing this coverage is effortless—simply head to the GInsure page in your GCash app, choose Travel Master, and fill in your travel details. Within moments, you'll have a policy that keeps you protected no matter where your journey takes you.

Exploring hidden destinations isn't just about seeing new places; it's about forging unique memories and experiencing the world in a way that feels personal and extraordinary. Whether you're chasing nature's marvels, immersing yourself in cultural heritage, or seeking peaceful retreats, the hidden gems of Japan and South Korea await. Start planning now and let the road less traveled lead you to unforgettable memories.



In Support Of



Book a Great Deal*, Protect Wildlife and Habitats in Asia

*T&Cs apply



AGODA EXPANDS ECO DEALS PROGRAM

Digital travel platform Agoda announced the launch of its fourth Eco Deals program at the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in Malaysia, expanding its ongoing partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). In line with the forum's theme, "Unity In Motion: Shaping ASEAN's Tourism Tomorrow," this initiative supports the protection of wildlife and the conservation of critical habitats in Asia.

Agoda has set a donation target of USD1.5-million, surpassing the previous year's goal of USD1-million in 2024. This year, the program is being expanded to include Japan and Korea, covering 10 markets in total. Similar to previous editions, Agoda

will donate USD1 towards WWF's conservation efforts for every program booking made at a participating hotel.

The Eco Deals initiative will fund a wide array of conservation activities, including restoring wetlands in Japan, protecting spoonbills in Korea, and ongoing projects such as advancing tiger conservation in Malaysia, protecting whale sharks in the Philippines, conserving elephants in Thailand, safeguarding saolas in Viet Nam, restoring ecosystems in Indonesia, developing urban wetlands in Laos PDR, and supporting rangers in Cambodia. The Eco Deals program will be open to consumers for bookings from January 20, 2025, to December 19, 2025.

As part of the Eco Deals framework for 2025, Agoda is also introducing the Sustainable Tourism Impact Fund in collaboration with WWF-Singapore and UnTours Foundation. The fund provides affordable and flexible investment capital to support change-making businesses addressing sustainability challenges in the tourism sector. Agoda is designating USD100,000 to the fund, with the potential to increase to USD150,000 upon reaching the USD1.5-million donation target.

Damien Pfirsch, chief commercial officer at Agoda, said, "With Eco Deals 2025, we are committed to doing even more to support efforts to protect Asia's remarkable destinations and

wildlife. In partnership with WWF, our goal is to ensure that future generations can explore the world affordably while preserving its natural beauty. The Eco Deals Program has been an important initiative for our hotel partners since its inception in 2022, offering them an accessible way to support wildlife protection and habitat conservation projects. Building on past successes, we are scaling up this year. This expansion creates enhanced opportunities for hotels to participate in this meaningful effort. Additionally, the launch of the Sustainable Tourism Impact Fund will provide crucial support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), empowering them to adopt sustainable practices and contribute meaningfully to the tourism industry's future."

Through the Eco Deals program, hotel partners can offer customers

discounted rates of up to 15%. In exchange, these participating partners receive the Eco Deals badge and are featured prominently across various Agoda platforms, including social media, banner promotions, customer emails, and in-app notifications, enhancing their visibility. Additionally, customers can easily find Eco Deals through Agoda's dedicated landing pages, designed for seamless browsing on desktop and mobile devices.

The Sustainable Tourism Impact Fund is designed to provide investment capital to MSMEs in the tourism sector across several Southeast Asian markets, fostering innovation and advancing conservation to help shape the future of travel in a more sustainable way.

Under the fund scheme, eligible MSMEs seeking funding to enhance their sustainability efforts in the travel

sector can apply for low-interest loans ranging from USD10,000 to USD 5,000. The fund is managed by UnTours Foundation, ensuring effective application and screening processes, while Agoda contributes financing, investment decisions, and mentorship, with WWF-Singapore assisting in environmental guidance and due diligence. Interested businesses can submit their applications via the fund's official webpage at <https://untoursfoundation.org/sustainable-tourism-impact-fund>.

With its global network encompassing diverse accommodations, and experiences, Agoda furthers its dedication to a more sustainable future for travel. Collaborations with organizations like WWF and UnTours Foundation bolster Agoda's efforts, ensuring a positive ecological and socio-economic impact can be made through every journey.



(L-R): WWF-Singapore CEO VIVEK KUMAR, Thailand Minister of Tourism and Sport SORAWONG, Laos Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism DARANY PHOMMAVONGSA, Singapore Minister of State for Trade and Industry ALVIN TAN, Vietnam Vice Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism HO AN PHONG, Malaysia Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture TIONG KING SING, Agoda Chief Commercial Officer DAMIEN PFIRSCH, Brunei Darussalam Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism DATO DR. ABDUL MANAF METUSSIN, Cambodia Minister of Tourism HOUT HAK, Indonesia Minister of Tourism WIDIYANTI PUTRI WARDHANA, Philippines Secretary of the Department of Tourism H.E. CHRISTINA GARCIA FRASCO.

GRAB AND BYD ENTER STRATEGIC REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP TO EXPAND EV FLEET

Grab, a leading superapp in Southeast Asia, and BYD have announced a regional partnership to expand access to up to 50,000 BYD electric vehicles (EVs) to Grab's driver-partners across Southeast Asia, while increasing the availability of green vehicles to Grab users.

Across Southeast Asia, high upfront costs remain a key barrier for EV adoption. Through this partnership, Grab and BYD look to boost the electrification of the transportation sector in Southeast Asia by providing Grab's fleet partners and driver-partners with access to BYD vehicles at the most competitive rates, with extended warranties on the EV vehicles' batteries. Drivers will have the option of renting the EVs from Grab's fleet partners or opt for financing support through Grab's car ownership schemes. The partnership supports Grab's commitment to help driver-partners accelerate the transition to zero-emission modes of transport. In countries like Singapore and Thailand, Grab users can also choose to toggle on the "Eco-Friendly Ride" option, which will prioritize allocating green vehicles at no additional charge.

Deep technology integration to enhance efficiency and overall experience of Grab services

BYD and Grab will collaborate to facilitate deep IoT integration between the vehicles and Grab's platform and services. Through this collaboration, Grab aims to deliver:

- **Safer rides and a more intuitive driving experience for driver-partners:** By installing the Grab driver application available in the head unit of BYD vehicles, drivers will be able to view their jobs, navigation, and chats all at a



glance on a larger screen instead of having to toggle back and forth on their smartphones. Sensor and telemetry data from BYD vehicles will also be integrated directly into the Grab platform, providing real-time insights into drivers' driving patterns and behaviors, which Grab can use to give guidance to drivers on how to improve their driving behavior.

- **Improved reliability:** With data like wiper signals and travel speed feeding into the Grab platform in real-time, Grab will be able to infer more quickly and accurately external conditions such as weather and traffic. This data, when fed back into Grab's algorithm is then used to guide drivers towards areas where there is likely greater demand for rides, ensuring that there are sufficient drivers to meet spikes in passenger bookings. Real-time location data from the BYD fleet will also further boost the accuracy of Grab's backend system in deriving a more precise estimated time of arrival (ETA) for a ride.

- **Better navigation and routing:** Both companies aim to leverage Grab's hyperlocal map data and services to facilitate smoother and more efficient journeys for BYD drivers. This collaboration could also enable Grab to collect valuable road and traffic data from the vehicles, potentially enhancing its mapping services.

The partnership spans Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, and covers a range of models, including the DENZA D9, BYD ATTO3, BYD SEAL, and BYD M6 cars. Grab intends for DENZA, the premium electric vehicle brand from BYD, to become the cornerstone of its GrabExec fleet featuring the DENZA D9 luxury seven-seater electric MPVs. These vehicles are designed with state-of-the-art features, to offer unparalleled comfort and luxury. By integrating the DENZA D9 into its fleet, Grab aims to set a new standard in executive transportation, anchored on convenience, style, and sustainability.



KINGSTON TECHNOLOGY REMAINS AMONG TOP PRIVATE COMPANIES IN 2024

Kingston Technology, a world leader in memory products and technology solutions, recently announced that it ranked #29 on Forbes' list of [America's Top Private Companies](#) for 2024.

With over 20 years proudly as the No. 1 top third-party supplier of [DRAM modules in the world](#) and another year as #1 for 1 Kingston is the only "Technology Hardware & Equipment" company in the top 100. While these outside acknowledgments are determined by revenue or units shipped, they are the result of something else.

"Built on Commitment" is not just a tagline or campaign but the basis of Kingston Technology. For almost 40 years, Kingston has been devoted

to providing the best in service and memory and storage solutions, such as the award-winning IronKey and Kingston FURY lines. It has also continued to grow through the shared values of its employees, partners, and customers.

"This Forbes standing, along with our philosophy of "Built on Commitment" represents our dedication to product quality and reliability, customer care, long-term partnerships, and, of course, our employees," said Kingston. "None of those things are achievable without the other, and the strong foundation Kingston laid within the industry."

Since 1987, Kingston has been a trusted partner in driving innovation and delivering high-quality memory

and storage solutions. More than just products, Kingston stands by its commitment to four key pillars: Reliability, Performance, Quality, and Support.

The full list of *America's Largest Private Companies* can be found [here](#).

For more information visit [kingston.com](#).



PAG-IBIG FUND NAMED AMONG TOP PERFORMERS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Pag-IBIG Fund named among GCG's Top Performing Government Firms for Good Governance



Pag-IBIG Fund was recognized as one of the top-performing government-owned companies by the Governance Commission of GOCCs (GCG) in an awards ceremony held in Pasay City recently.

Based on its evaluation systems, the GCG ranked Pag-IBIG Fund among the Top 10 Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) for earning the highest ratings.

“We are truly honored to be one of the top 10 GOCCs recognized by the GCG. This is yet another testament to Pag-IBIG Fund’s consistently outstanding performance that it is known for. This further inspires us to continue doing our best, as we continue to heed the

directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in pursuing excellence in government service so that more of our countrymen can gain better lives through Pag-IBIG Fund’s programs and services,” said Secretary Jose Rizalino L. Acuzar of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), who is also the chairman of the 11-member Pag-IBIG Fund Board of Trustees.

The GCG Awards were held in November 2024 at the Philippine International Convention Center to recognize GOCCs for their outstanding performance in the Corporate Governance Scorecard and in the Performance Evaluation System or PES for the year 2023. The awarding ceremony was led by GCG

Chairperson Atty. Marius P. Corpus, with Commissioners Atty. Brian Keith F. Hosaka and Atty. Geraldine Marie B. Berberabe-Martinez, as well as other top officials of the said agency.

“We would like to thank GCG for the recognition given to Pag-IBIG Fund. GCG’s recognition exemplifies our strong performance in bringing our savings and home loan programs to more members, our robust financial standing, and consistent adherence to best governance practices in 2023. We are committed to serving our members wholeheartedly with our *Lingkod Pag-IBIG* brand of service — *Tapat na Serbisyo, Mula sa Puso*,” said Pag-IBIG chief executive officer Marilene C. Acosta.

PITX LAUNCHES GET EV SHUTTLE SERVICE FOR SUSTAINABLE AND RELIABLE COMMUTING

The Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) recently launched the PITX Electric Shuttle Service in partnership with GET Philippines, Inc., the country's only fully electric passenger transport service company. This eco-friendly and efficient transport solution aims to provide sustainable and convenient commuting options for passengers traveling between PITX and key destinations within the SM Mall of Asia (MOA) complex. The official launch took place on January 24, marking a significant milestone in the advancement of green transport solutions in the region.

Designed to support environmental sustainability, the service utilizes GET Philippines Inc.'s COMET electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce carbon emissions and offer a greener alternative to traditional public transport. The PITX Electric Shuttle Service is tailored to the needs of partner organizations, offering customized routes and schedules that cater to office workers, students, and mall-goers within the MOA complex.

Service Routes and Coverage

The initial route stops include:

- PITX
- SMX
- SM MOA South Wing
- SM MOA North Wing
- Two E-Com Center
- Four E-Com Center
- SM Retail HQ/Shore Residences Bldg. C
- Shore 3 Residences
- Shell Residences
- SM MOA Globe
- Sea Residences

Initially, three shuttle units will be deployed to serve the route from



Friday to Sunday, operating from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Depending on passenger demand and operational feasibility, the service may be expanded to accommodate more days and additional units in the future, ensuring scalability to meet commuter needs effectively.

Seamless Commuting with GETPass App

Passengers can avail of the service and become members of the PITX transportation organization through a mobile app called GETPass, which provides real-time vehicle tracking, trip schedules, and route information. This ensures passengers have a dependable transport option, minimizing uncertainties associated with traditional commuting.

Enhanced Connectivity and Commuter Benefits

The PITX Electric Shuttle Service aims to enhance connectivity within the MOA complex by offering routes and drop-off points that accommodate the specific requirements of passengers, including National University students, office and mall workers, and SMDC residents. This initiative ensures that daily commutes are more convenient and efficient.

The introduction of the PITX Electric Shuttle Service aligns with the increasing demand for sustainable transport alternatives, offering a modern solution that prioritizes environmental responsibility while addressing the evolving needs of commuters.

THE *Detroit* ELECTRIC

Words by Jose Alvarez | Photos courtesy of Detroit Electric, and Car and Driver



Today, when we think about green mobility, we think about cars that don't use fossil fuels such as gasoline or hybrid cars that may use a mix of gasoline and electric fuel sources that put less greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere. Elon Musk's Tesla and the hybrid Toyota Prius are the foremost examples of these types of cars today. Gasoline was once widely available and cheaper to use, and the technology for electric cars wasn't there back in the day. Early electric vehicles were far slower and had less range than their gasoline counterparts, and to top it all off, the infrastructure just didn't support it. But like all technologies, people have tried to find alternative methods to use electric cars in spite of the high costs and feasibility. My research took me a lot further back in time than I expected and to the doorstep of Detroit Electric, which lasted from 1907 to 1939.

Detroit Electric was known as the Anderson Carriage Company until 1911 and produced carriages and buggies since 1884. It gets its name from the automobile manufacturing home of Detroit, Michigan. This is also the home of Ford, General Motors, and Cadillac. Many early cars used hand cranks to power the internal combustion engines, which was very physically demanding (today, you just turn a key or press a button). The 1914 Detroit Electric 5-Passenger Opera Coupe cost USD3,000 with a rechargeable lead acid battery, or USD3,880 with a nickel-iron battery (USD94,681.50 to USD122,454.74 in 2025 dollars). By contrast, Henry Ford's Model T, which also had the advantage of being mass-produced, was as cheap as USD290 in 1924 (USD5,352.37 in 2025 dollars).

As previously mentioned, early electric cars couldn't go very fast or even very far. Detroit Electric advertised their cars as getting around 80 miles (130km) per charge. One driver reported running 211.3 miles (340.1km) on a single charge. The car's top speed was only 20mph (32kph), but that was enough to drive within city or town limits. Today, electric vehicle owners can easily charge their cars when not in use using their own home or electric charging stations. We also have to take into account that car batteries (along with other types of batteries) degrade over time, and probably even more so in the early 20th century. Despite these limitations, Detroit Electric forged on. In a twist of irony, Clara Ford, the wife of Henry Ford, drove a Detroit Electric. Other famous individuals who drove a Detroit Electric were inventor Thomas Edison, First Lady Mamie Eisenhower (wife of US President Dwight D. Eisenhower), and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr. It was even featured in a 1962 episode — *The Case of the Borrowed Baby* — of the popular TV show *Perry Mason*.

Ford's use of the assembly line meant cheaper automobiles for everyone, which was already a thorn in Detroit Electric's side. The lack of infrastructure made it more of a novel curiosity and plaything for the rich, who may have had the money to buy something like an electric car. By the 1920s, electric cars had declined as mass-produced vehicles got even cheaper, and the Great Depression made them out of reach for the average person. Still, Detroit Electric pushed on and lasted all the way to 1939, although some cars were available as late as 1942.

A Useful Present to the Family

As a gift you cannot express your Christmas Good Will and most appreciative sentiments in a more rare and exquisite form. The image of Santa Claus is represented at its best in this beautiful 1914 Detroit Electric. With it you merely ride the miles away.

Beginning with Christmas day, this beautiful Detroit Electric will enter intimately into the daily, yes, hourly life of every member of your family. It becomes a family institution.

The satisfaction of possessing the supreme and exclusive advantages of a Detroit Electric adds much to your pleasure and permanent satisfaction.

Our purpose in maintaining the leadership of the electric automobile industry has been not to cheapen, but to raise the quality of the Detroit Electric by ways possible only in an institution of such national scope as ours.

Potentially this purpose has resulted in such a large volume of business that we are able to make substantial reductions in the prices of our cars for 1914, although we have added many improvements in design, quality of materials and methods of manufacture.

We offer a choice of seven or eight models, a number of special accessories, a choice of four seat styles, and the choice of nickel-iron or lead-acid batteries. The nickel-iron battery is the most durable, longest lasting, and most economical. It is the choice of the most discerning motorists. Having provided in a model which will meet every requirement.

The price of our cars is low for the reason that we are able to produce them in large quantities. And for our own credit to the public. And for our own credit to the public. And for our own credit to the public.

Anderson Electric Car Co.
DETROIT, U. S. A.

DEALERS OF
THE Detroit ELECTRIC
Largest manufacturers of electric pleasure vehicles in the world.

A 1913 Detroit Electric ad

The legacy of Detroit Electric found life in other countries such as Japan, where Genzo Shimazu, the founder of Japan Storage Battery Co. (today known as the GS Yuasa Corporation) drove them around after importing two cars in 1917 and used them to demonstrate the effectiveness of battery technology. Shimazu was seen driving them around until his retirement in 1946. In fact, GS Yuasa restored one of Shimazu's vehicles to working condition in 2009 with a modern lithium-ion 24-volt battery. May 20 is now Electric Car Day in Japan. Many Detroit Electric cars have made it to museums around the world

in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia, and several are still driven to this day.

While it took until the 1960s to even get *interest* in electric cars going again, multiple attempts to get them popular again failed until the 2000s, when the Tesla Roadster launched. It took until the 2010s for major car manufacturers to develop and heavily market electric vehicles. While electric cars are increasing in popularity and use, just remember the name Detroit Electric if you want to know a great origin story.

THE PHILIPPINES' FIRST TECH LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

GADGETS MAGAZINE

Volume XXV Issue VII

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Content Developers
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REN ALCANTARA

Mobility Specialist
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Content Creators
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